

e-newsletter

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2012



In last year's TAO Christmas gift-giving, YP volunteers walk along earth dikes to reach Isla Pulo in Tanza, Navotas and distribute gift packages for children. See story on page 3.



www.ypws.tao-pilipinas.org

YP Reunion held at The Malayan Plaza

A GRAND REUNION WAS ORGANIZED BY TAO-PILIPINAS FOR YP FELLOWS -- participants of the Young Professionals Orientation and Training Program (YP-OTP) which started in 2005. It was held on December 3, 2011 at the 33rd Floor Lounge of The Malayan Plaza, ADB Avenue corner Opal Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

The event was attended by twenty-eight (28) young design professionals who have been part of the YP-OTP projects consisting of five cycles of the YP Workshop on Social Housing and the YP Internships.

Pls. turn to page 2.

DRR Workshop conducted for Isla Pulo community

ON NOVEMBER 25 AND 26, 2011, TAO-PILIPINAS CONDUCTED A DISASTER RISK reduction (DRR) workshop for SAMASISIP, a community-based organization composed of 180 fisherfolk families located near the mouth of Navotas River at Sitio Pulo, Barangay Tanza, Navotas City. The workshop was done as part of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) funded project on "Demonstrating and Piloting Disaster Resilient Design in Flood Prone and Urban Poor Communities in Metro Manila".

Around 40 participants were present during the two-day workshop. Three representatives from Navotas City Planning and Development Office also attended

Pls. turn to page 3.

In this issue:

YP Reunion @ The Malayan Plaza
β DRR Workshop for Isla Pulo community
β Giftgiving in Navotas and Montalban
β YP Reflections by Sarah Chavez, Melody Sonsona, Cris Mabato and Jessa Saria

“Building a culture of prevention is not easy... While the costs of prevention have to be paid in the present, its benefits lie in the distant future. Moreover, the benefits are not tangible; they are the wars and disasters that do not happen.”

- Kofi Atta Annan, former UN Secretary General from 1997 to 2006

YP Reunion...

(From page 1)

Many of the around eighty (80) YP fellows since 2005 were unable to join the reunion because most are now working overseas. The YPs who were able to attend though, enjoyed the food and company as they were reminded of past YP activities in photos shown through audio-video presentations.

The occasion was graced by two (2) special guest lecturers, TAO Board of Trustee Architect Rosario Encarnacion-Tan and her spouse, Mr. Julio Galvez Tan. The couple roused the interest of the audience about *Bamboo in Sustainable Building Construction*. Mr. Juju Tan shared facts about the Philippine Forest and bamboo reforestation. He also thoroughly explained bamboo farming and harvesting and bamboo technology in building construction. Arch. Ning then tackled a bamboo vision in architecture, as well as design criteria for building with bamboo. She described her presentation as sharing her journey with building with bamboo and she showed several images of built projects that she has designed, including their houses in Quezon City and San Mateo, Rizal. Arch. Ning concluded her presentation by encouraging the YPs to pursue their interests with purpose and passion.

After the lecture presentation, the YPs were able to mingle with the other batches while they participated in the games prepared by TAO staff. They also donated gift packages for children to be distributed to TAO's partner communities during its 2011 Christmas Gift-giving activity. (Rosalyn Veneracion)



Top photo: YP fellows (batches 2005 to 2011); Bottom: TAO staff with guest lecturers Arch. Ning Encarnacion Tan and Mr. Julio Galvez Tan.



Top photos (L-R): batch 2011 YPs; YPs with special guest lecturer Arch. Ning Tan-Encarnacion; batch 2005 YPs; Bottom photos (L-R): batch 2008 and 2010 YPs; batch 2009 YPs; YPs play a game with game master Angel.



Giftgiving organized in Navotas and Montalban

A Christmas gift-giving activity was organized by TAO-Pilipinas to bring yuletide cheer to children in their assisted communities. From monetary and in-kind donations of its staff, Board of Trustees, volunteers, and friends, TAO was able to collect children's toys, clothes, bags and storybooks. These were sorted and more than 250 gift packages were wrapped for distribution. YP fellows from batch 2011 helped out in wrapping the gifts and distributing them in Navotas and Montalban.



On December 17 the gifts were distributed in four communities in Navotas --- Masagana and Isla Pulo in Bgy. Tanza; and R. Domingo and Pantalan Uno in Bgy. Tangos. Community leaders in each area prelisted 50 children to receive the gifts. The YPs also prepared games for children and more gifts were given as prizes. On December 20 the YPs went to Kasiglahan Village 1 Phase 1D in Montalban, Rizal for the continuation of the gift-giving activity. Fifty more gift packages were distributed as children also participated in fun games. *(Ge Matabang)*

For photos of last year's gift-giving activity, please go to the YP facebook page at www.facebook.com/TAO Young Professionals.

DRR Workshop...

(From page 1)

the first day activities. The workshop was held at the Noah Training Center in Barangay Tanza to make it more accessible for the community. The following were the objectives of the workshop:

- 1) Provide the community with knowledge on disaster risk reduction;
- 2) Increase and enhance the people's understanding of the disaster risk situation in their community through the identification and analysis of the hazards, vulnerability and capacity of the community; and
- 3) Come up with a community action plan to address their weaknesses and strengthen their capacity to cope with disasters.



A lecture about climate change and its connection to disaster risk reduction was presented by workshop facilitators from TAO. A geologist from SEASTEMS, Ms. Armie Jean Perez, gave a lecture about the hydro-meteorological and geological hazards specific to Navotas City. During the two-day workshop, the participants did a lot of activities through focus group discussions, including the identification and assessment of community hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities, and the formulation of a community emergency plan which they could use as reference/guide during times of disaster. Their discussions focused on six hazards they determined as they are most exposed to --- typhoons, floods, storm surge, thunder and lightning, ground subsidence, and earthquakes. Using Google Earth images as base maps, they also drew maps to identify the location of hazards, resources, and evacuation routes in

Pls. turn to page 7.



Sarah Maria L. Chavez, 19, is a senior student of BS Environmental Planning and Management at Miriam College in Quezon City.

Pinlano ko ang aking sembreak kasama ang barkada ko. Sabi namin magsi-swimming kami, mag-o-overnight, magmo-movie marathon, maglalaro, magpa-party, at kakain ng kakain. Pero napadpad ako sa TAO Pilipinas at doon napunta ang isang linggo ng sembreak ko. Hindi ako nagrereklamo, nangyari naman lahat ng pinlano naming gawin...sa ibang paraan nga lang.

Nakilala ko ang 15 na mga kabataang kagaya ko --- nais matuto, mapalawak ang kaalaman at magkaroon ng karanasan patungkol sa disaster risk reduction, climate change, housing, at marami pang iba. Madami kaming mga inaasahan at higit pa doon ang ibinigay ng TAO Pilipinas sa amin. Madami akong natutunang mga bagong bagay hindi lamang mula sa mga tagapag-salita kung hindi ay pati na rin sa aming mga ginawa noong linggong iyon.

Gusto ko mag-swimming, natupad ito noong napunta ang grupo namin sa Tanza, Navotas. Ang komunidad ng Masagana ay masagana sa tubig, ang komunidad nila ay lubog sa baha 24/7, minsan hanggang tuhod lang, pero tuwing umaga ay umaabot ito hanggang beywang. Para makarating sa mga bahay, nagsuot kami ng boots o kaya naman ay sumakay kami ng balsa (magaling ka dapat mag-balance). Nagtangka din kaming mag-jump shot sa baha, pero hindi kami nagtagumpay.

Movie marathon... ang buhay sa Masagana ay parang isang pelikula, ang daming drama dahil madami silang problemang kinakaharap, tulad ng ulan, bagyo, baha, pagsiguro ng titulo ng lupa, atbp. at ang TAO ang naging super hero nila. Isang relocation site ang pinagpaplanuhan nila sa ngayon at sa lugar na ito sa Angat, Bulacan ay nais nilang magsimula muli.

Nagtagal kami sa Masagana ng 3 araw at 2 gabi, isang beses lang kami naligo dahil hirap sila kumuha ng tubig, at hirap din kaming maligo dahil kakaiba ang banyo nila, walang toilet bowl, walang sink, ang mayroon lang ay "battab": batya at tabo. Masaya ang naging karanasan namin doon. Iyon ang maganda sa maliit na bahay, lagi kayong sama-sama sa lahat ng bagay. Isang kwarto lang para sa lahat ng tao at lahat ng gawain. Sabay-sabay kaming matulog, gumising, kumain, at mag-toothbrush.

Doon din kami nagplano ng aming isasagawang workshop para sa mga tao sa komunidad. Mahiyain ako at medyo nahirapan ako makipag-usap sa mga tao, pero pinilit kong gawin ang makakaya ko. Napagtagumpayan namin ang pagsasagawa ng workshop sa tulong ng mga tao ng Masagana. Marami silang mga saloobin at kumento, hindi man sapat ang isang araw na workshop para dito, masasabi kong nakagawa tayo ng isang malaking hakbang tungo sa pangarap na nais nilang makamit.

Hindi ko malilimutan ang isang linggong pag-ibig. Pag-ibig sa mga taong nakilala at nakasama ko, sa mga taga-TAO Pilipinas, sa mga tao ng Masagana, sa sarili ko, at sa kalikasan. Ang sembreak na iyon ang huli kong sembreak bilang isang estudyante, nagpapasalamat ako na iyon ang itinadhana ni Lord na mangyari sa atin.

P.S. Naiinis ako sa commercial na "Good morning sa inyo..." pero ngayon tuwing nakikita ko ito ay napapangiti ako.



From top, L-R: Sarah (second from right) with her YP Team mates as they arrive at Masagana community in Tanza, Navotas; enjoying dinner with group and host family; reaching out for a team mate to jump into a makeshift raft.



Lady Melody R. Sonsona, 21, is a 5th year student of BS Civil Engineering at the Technological Institute of the Philippines at Manila City.

This year's Young Professionals Workshop on Social Housing organized by the Technical Assistance Organization (TAO – Pilipinas) centered on various activities that brought about changes not only for us YPs but most especially for informal settler communities to change their situation for the better. It is important for the people from the informal settlements to take a lead in improving their circumstances and for us to provide support during the process.

As one of the participants in the 7-day workshop, I have now a better understanding on the problems surrounding the areas where informal settlers live. These people are highly vulnerable to different forms of hazards, both natural and man-made. The underserved and bad living conditions characterized by poor quality housing, poor sanitation, overcrowding, inadequate water supply, and insecurity of tenure make them more vulnerable to climate change.

This workshop has opened my eyes on what the real world is. It is true that we, as students (and later on we'll join the working class as young professionals) should not be confined within the four walls of the classroom. A workshop like this is a must for every student, whatever course they are taking. Like me, I learned a lot and actually in the short span of one week, the workshop has

Pls. turn to page 7.



From top, L-R: Melody giving inputs on DRR topics; sharing meals with host family; Melody (fourth from left) and her YP Team mates in Tangos, Navotas



Cris Benedict M. Mabato, 20, is a senior student of BS Architecture at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines in Manila City.

Some pursue happiness, others create it. Ito ang motto ko.

Nung narinig ko sa professor ang tungkol sa workshop na ito, nagtaas ako kaagad ng kamay. Mam, Mam! Sali ako diyan! (Sabay bulong sa tabi, pandagdag sa resume yan..) Hindi ko na naisip kung anong mangyayari basta adventure at madadagdagan ang page ng resume ko. Sasama ako!

Workshop na. Hala, ganito pala yun. Electrifying ang mga gagawin. Na-excite ako nung sinabi na ang mga gagawin para sa immersion at lumala pa ito nung sinabi kung saan ang Team namin pupunta – sa Tanza, Navotas na kilala bilang bahaing lugar sa Metro Manila. Mahilig ako sa adventure, pumunta kung saan- saan na malayo sa sibilisasyon, umakyat ng bundok at matuto ng iba't ibang klaseng pamumuhay ng tao.

Nagsimula na ang immersion, nagsimula na rin ang pagkakaibigan namin nila Sarah, Mhar, Arvin, at Russel. Hindi ko ito inaasahan. Ang alam ko magbibigay lang kami ng kaalaman sa komunidad ng Tanza. Higit pa pala doon. Nagkaroon ako ng pangalawang pamilya na sabay sabay kumain habang nakaupo sa sahig. Kumain ng lahat ng klaseng pagkain, kumain ng lahat ng parte ng isda at kumain ng hindi nag-aaksaya ni-isang butil ng kanin. Hindi rin mawawala diyan ang pagyanig ng simple at pres-

Pls. turn to page 7.



From top, L-R: Cris facilitating a focus group discussion; giving inputs on DRR topics; Cris (front, second from left) with his YP Team mates in Tanza, Navotas.



Jessabel S. Saria, 19, is a senior student of BS Architecture at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines in Manila City.

“It is time for us to go to the people rather than ask the people especially the poor to come to us” is the remarkable tag line of TAO Pilipinas, a non-government organization giving technical assistance to communities in improving their way of living.

The 7-day Young Professionals Workshop was held last October 19-25, 2011. Three days of lecture sessions held at a function hall was very informative and gave empowering knowledge, shared to us by professionals in relation with the main topic, “Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in Community Planning and Development”. What they provided us can help guide future architects, engineers and planners of our society.

The very exciting part of the YP Workshop is the community immersion, wherein the YP participants were divided into groups to stay within an urban poor community and hold a DRR workshop for the community members. I was assigned with my other co-YPs to stay in Kasiglahan Phase 1-D in Montalban, Rizal. We met there a lot of extraordinary people --- Ate Sally, the homeowners’ association president and other co-officers, Ate Myrna and Ate Vangie. Each of them has an inspiring life story, especially how they have to do programs and projects to help and improve their community. They initiate to make their own steps in providing for their families and their community despite lacking financial assistance from the local government.

Sharing our knowledge as architecture students through the community workshop has been the most fulfilling part of the immersion experience. When I heard about the YP workshop, I just thought that it was good because at first all I really wanted was just an experience, without really knowing the things that might take place in the workshop. But after the workshop, there are a lot of things I have gained, not just knowledge but I was also filled with encouragement and concern to help people that architects, engineers and planners should serve.

Service without borders, this is our real job. It means to give service not only to those who can afford to hire and pay architects and professionals to have functional and aesthetically appealing homes, but we should openly give our services to those who are really

in need of it. The unselfish life is a satisfying life. It’s not always about the salary because there are a lot of more valuable things that we should give importance to. Being successful is not just about having a good career, being famous or having a lot of money. Success is not measured by the things we have but by the things we can give to others who are in need. When we give, we gain more.

The workshop became an eye opener for me as well as for the other YP participants. The organization made us realize and see the real situation of communities we should help when we are already professionals in our own fields. They took us from our comfort zone inside the classrooms, letting us observe and understand a lot of the things taking place in the real world. There are a lot more things we should consider and analyze to improve the society we’re living in. We are part of a bigger picture and if every one of us will play the role that we need to play, it will be a better place for all of us. I hope that more people will be inspired by the organization and conduct such seminars to improve communities.



From top (L-R): Jessa with her YP Team mates in Kasiglahan Village in Rodriguez, Rizal; Jessa facilitating the mapping exercise and focus group discussion.

YP Reflections

Reflections by Melody Sonsona

(From page 5)

influenced me to be socially conscious and look at the situation of the underprivileged.

It is not easy living in a developing country like the Philippines but we have a lot of talented individuals and groups that can help in addressing the nation's perennial problems like population control, natural and man-made calamities, waste management, housing, poor sanitation, crimes, etc. As I see it, everyone has a role in contributing to the betterment of this country. This workshop helped me in some ways to alter a little about my plans after I graduate. After our community immersion, I asked myself if it's worth getting a high-paying job and get rich in the process but ignore those who cannot afford to live well? I know I can contribute a lot as a young professional by studying and acquiring more knowledge on how to address the persistent problems our country has been experiencing for so many years now.

Filipinos should support each other and I am thankful to be one of the privileged persons to have the means to study and have a better life than those who cannot even afford to live in a decent community. I know I can do something for our country no matter how small it is, because I believe that if every Filipino will make their humble contribution, we can make this country and the world a much better place to live in.

Reflections by Cris Mabato

(From page 5)

kong bahay ni Aling Dianne dahil sa di-matigil na pagtawa ng bawat isa, ang paghampas sa dingding na gawa sa pinagsama-samang plywood, tarpaulin, at kahoy at pagpukpok sa sahig na gawa sa pinagdikit-dikit na kahoy na nakapatong sa apat na bamboo post para maitaas ang lebel ng sahig. Ito ay matibay sa lahat ng oras at nagsilbing inspirasyon sa bawat isa na ipagpatuloy ang nasimulan na pamamahaging kaalaman sa nangangailangan.

Sa pagsama sa programang ito, nadagdagan ng album ang facebook account ko at madami ang nakapansin. Ang iba like ng like, yung iba inggit! Ang iba masaya para sa akin, at yung iba naman hindi nagustuhan dahil siguro sa nakita nilang mga lugar. Kung alam lang nila, ang bawat litrato na iyon ay naglalarawan ng hindi mabilang na ngiti at karanasan na di lahat ng tao kayang isulat sa kanilang diary. Ang masaksihan at maranasan na makasama ang isang komunidad nang alam mo na nakakatulong ka at nakakapagpasaya ka ay isang malaking gantimpala.

Ako nga po pala si Cris Benedict Mengullo Mabato, nagpapasalamat sa TAO-Pilipinas sa napakasarp na pagkain, maayos na tirahan at lalo na sa pagkakataong na mapabilang sa mga sa tumutulong sa mga taong di sapat ang kaalaman para mabuo ang simpleng bahay na pinapangarap nila na malayo sa disgrasya at may sapat na pahingahan.

DRR Workshop...

(From page 3)

their community.

The highlight of the workshop was on the second day when they prepared their community DRR action plans after giving various suggestions for disaster mitigating actions and community projects. From the community DRR projects that they identified, they chose three priority projects which led to the formulation of three community action plans. The projects they chose were 1) repair of wooden bridge access; 2) repair and improvement of earth dike; and 3) house repairs.

Overall, the participants enjoyed the workshop and learned a lot from the facilitators based on the evaluation they gave after the workshop proper. They were also very much willing to share the knowledge they gained from the workshop to neighbors who were not able to attend.

The workshop is part of a series of DRR workshops that TAO-Pilipinas will conduct in connection with the ADB-funded Pilot Demonstration Project in Navotas. The officers of the community association were tasked with coordinating the follow through activities outlined in the formulated action plans. Another consultation workshop has been scheduled in December to tackle the design requirements for the proposed bridge and earth dike repairs. (Angel Sales)



Top; Isla Pulo community members are taught how to create their hazards maps; bottom: focus groups complete their community emergency plans.