



## How self-help construction is being implemented in the Masagana Resettlement Project

by Ma. Lorena P. Hernandez

THE ORIGINAL MEMBERS of Masagana community hailed from an inundated resettlement site in Barangay Tanza, Navotas City. The unsafe site condition of the 5-hectare reclaimed fishpond spurred the members to relocate to a 1.4-hectare lot in Barangay Pulong Yantok, Angat, Bulacan Province in 2012. However, some members decided to stay in Navotas after citing livelihood, educational, and other immediate opportunities that they cannot leave behind. Hence, the members agreed to have a 5-year adjustment period to complete their relocation. The early resettlers constructed makeshift houses in a staging area beside the still underdeveloped Masagana lot while the preparations for house construction and site development were underway. The members used salvaged materials from their previous houses in Navotas or

bought materials from the nearest hardware.

### House Design and Budget

The design of the Masagana houses in Angat was finalized in 2013 after TAO conducted design workshops with the members. The result was a two-storey duplex structure with provisions for toilet and bath and a kitchen counter. The building footprint of one dwelling unit is 5m by 4.5m with a total floor area of 45 sqm. The 2m by 1.8m toilet and bath is situated under the stairs and adjacent to the kitchen counter (see floor plan in attached images). The total estimated cost of a duplex structure is around Php 900,000.00 in 2016. Unfortunately, the remaining funds after the purchase of the Masagana lot, through the ACCA Big Project funding, was not enough to cover

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## TAO releases TSM 20th anniversary edition on Kindle

by Geraldine Matabang

COMPLETING THE 20TH anniversary celebration of TAO-Pilipinas is the release of a new issue of TAO Shelter Magazine (TSM). Featured in this special edition,

dubbed TSM 20, are the stories of change among TAO's community partners and the ways forward for the organization. The magazine

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# TAO conducts end-of-project assessment with community partners

by Geraldine Matabang

*Online survey, validation and FGD sessions cap the three-year Misereor project*

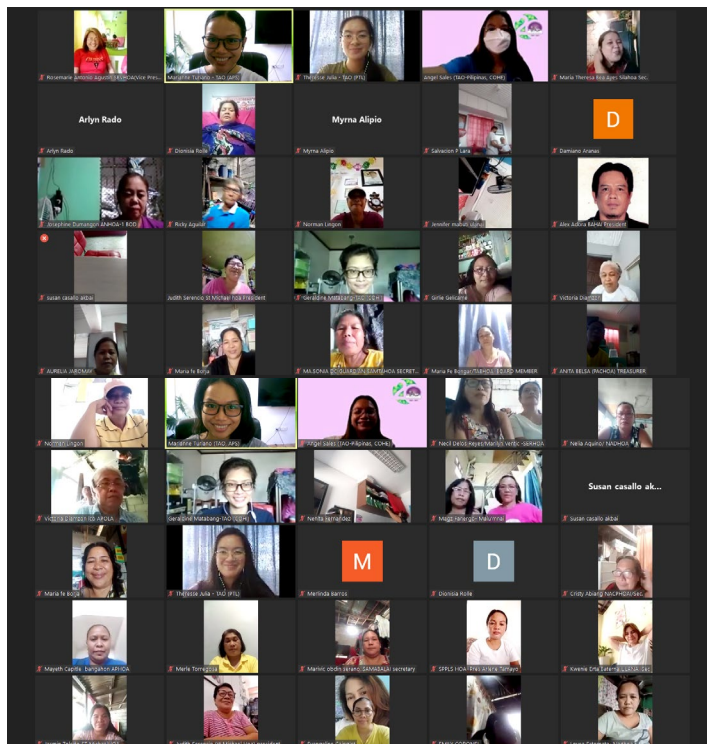
AT THE CLOSE OF the Misereor-supported project called “Building Sustainable and Disaster-resilient Communities”, the community partners assessed the project’s outcomes with TAO-Pilipinas. Three POs or people’s organizations—APOLA (Alliance of People’s Organizations in Lupang Arenda) federation, Masagana of Angat Homeowners Association, and PPVHOA (People’s Plan Ville Homeowners Association)—participated in the third and final leg of their yearly assessment of the project. Adhering to Alert Level 2 restrictions, TAO organized and held online assessment activities throughout February 2022.

TAO conducted three online activities with each PO; these included answering an online survey using KoBo Toolbox and participating in two Zoom sessions. In the first virtual meeting (session 1), the community members validated the survey data results which TAO processed and presented. In session 2, they completed the project indicator monitoring chart (an assessment tool which they updated every year) through focus group discussions. This was already the second time that the POs have undergone remote assessment of the project (see [YP e-Newsletter March-April 2021 issue](#)) and they were already familiar with the online platform and

tools used. TAO’s project area teams initially met online with the respective PO leaders (February 3 with APOLA; February 4 with Masagana and PPVHOA) to orient them on the survey and assessment.

The purpose of the end-of-project assessment with the PO partners was three-fold. First was to identify and evaluate the outcome of activities undertaken in year 3 and determine to what extent the target indicators of the project were reached. Second was to examine any observable effects after three years of project implementation and track the changes in the community brought about by the project. Lastly, the assessment aimed to find out how project benefits may be sustained and how the project outputs will be managed by the community after project completion.

It is important for TAO to undertake assessment with its PO partners in order to better understand the community’s view of the project outcomes. The POs examined the outcomes in terms of five indicators: improved site condition; formulated people’s plan; increased awareness of hazards; increased appreciation for renewable energy use; and low-carbon practices. They also took into account how the project enhanced the community’s capacity to address hazards, the participation of women



*Screenshot of some of the participants of the two-day community assessment with APOLA.*

and youth in community planning, and organizational strengthening.

## Assessment with APOLA

Eighty-three (83) APOLA households (representing just 1% of its 8,000 member-households) answered the KoBo survey from February 3 to 14. The survey respondents already represented 15 out of the 27 member-HOAs of the federation. APOLA’s session 1 was held in the morning of February 23 and had 66 Zoom participants. Session 2 was done in the morning of February 24 had 48 Zoom participants.

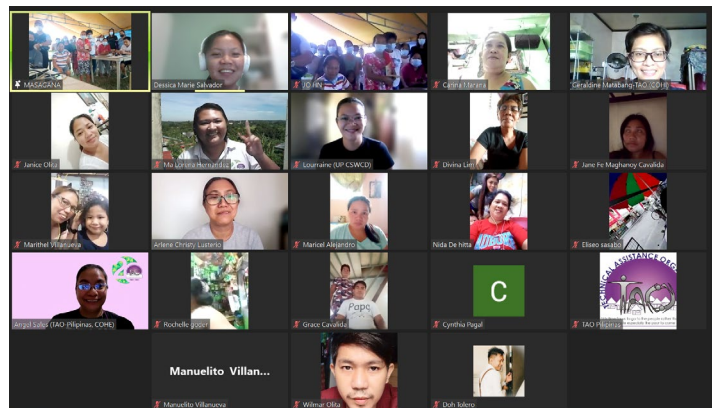
With APOLA, project activities that were started in the previous year continued into year 3, including the mapping of structures in the different HOAs and monitoring of compliance to building

regulations in Lupang Arenda. The assessment participants viewed the technical assistance as helpful in increasing their awareness of the standards for safe house construction and proper site upgrading. They also acknowledged that participation in the project and the technical knowledge they gained led to the strengthening of APOLA and of their resolve to legitimize their settlement in Lupang Arenda. Year 3 activities focused mainly on the preparations for the site’s reblocking, with a series of workshops that oriented community leaders on the reblocking process. The assessment participants considered the workshops vital to prepare the leaders in facing the difficulties of drafting and implementing a reblocking plan, since many residents remain

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## TAO conducts end-of-project assessment...

(continued from page 2)



Masagana did a blended set-up for the community assessment where some members who reside in Angat gathered in their chapel area while the rest logged online with the facilitators.

uncooperative.

In reviewing the project's target indicators, the participants saw the project as mostly successful in facilitating the formulation of a people's plan for APOLA, and in the process, also improved the community's relation with local government. They viewed the project to have significantly increased the community members' awareness of hazards in their area. Moving forward to achieve the goal of a more disaster-resilient community entails creating a master development plan for Lupang Arenda, according to APOLA leaders.

The participants also articulated that more capability-building is needed in the areas of renewable energy (RE) use and low-carbon community practices. The project was only able to introduce these ideas to a few APOLA leaders through seminars and was not widely spread to other members. The community's knowledge of RE application is limited to solar streetlights that have been installed along C-6 road, while low-

carbon practices in some households include urban gardening and composting.

### Assessment with Masagana

With Masagana, 48 members (representing nearly 70% of its 69 member-households) answered the KoBo survey from February 4 to 13. Masagana's session 1 was held in the morning of February 25 and session 2 was continued in the afternoon of the same day. Fifty-six (56) community members attended the Zoom sessions.

The start of the project's year 3 in Masagana saw the completion of construction works for a number of community facilities (such as the multi-purpose facility and greenhouse) and the continuation of house building activities for another batch of households availing of the construction loan. The HOA also maintained the community's solar-powered streetlights (SSL) and water purification system (WPS) which have been providing Masagana with illumination at night and a clean drinking water

Mga katuparan ng proyekto: Ano ang mga naging katuparan o naranasang tagumpay ng 3-taong proyekto? Magbigay ng hanggang 3 sagot.

nagkapondo multipurpose  
community empowerment  
mas maayos na daanan  
magandang daan  
maayos na daanan  
hlurb makukumpleto na  
titulo na naayos na  
maayos na utilities  
paglakad sa bir  
malinis na inumin  
registration hlurb  
chapel  
nagkapondo angmultiporpos  
nagkaroon ng multi-purpos  
may sa

A screenshot of one of the plenary questions given after the synthesis of Session 1 for Masagana community assessment.

source. Nearly all households also kept taking care of and harvesting vegetables from their backyard gardens. All these outputs have contributed to incrementally improving the site and made a more pleasant community environment, stated the participants.

The participants also shared the difficulties they experienced in year 3. A new set of HOA leaders were elected but some members called out their inaction regarding organizational issues; misunderstandings were rife between the new officers and members. The community also continued to contend with the air pollution caused by a nearby factory, in which they had already lodged a complaint with authorities.

In their assessment of the project's target indicators, the participants noted the successful strides made on site improvements with the provision of basic services utilities and infrastructures during the first two years of the project. Additionally, they considered a key success the community's increased knowledge and appreciation for RE because of its application in their SSL and WPS and reliable use

in time of disasters. More households are looking at acquiring their own solar panels to lower their household electricity costs.

They noted gaps in the indicator related to disaster risk reduction—there was no progress made in establishing a community DRRM committee and they failed to stop the pollutive operation of the neighboring factory. The low-carbon practices of recycling, composting and backyard gardening are already prevalent in the community but garbage disposal remains problematic because their site is not included in the municipal garbage collection route.

### Assessment with PPVHOA

Fifty-one percent (51%) or 102 out of the 200 member-households of PPVHOA answered the KoBo survey from February 4 to 16. The survey respondents represented all of the four area-groups forming PPVHOA. Session 1 was held in the afternoon of February 23 with 22 Zoom participants from PPVHOA while session 2 was done in the afternoon of February 27 with 19 Zoom participants.

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# Gift giving bring holiday cheer to children in partner communities and relief to typhoon-affected families

by Geraldine Matabang



The contents of each holiday gift pack given to children.

TAO'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS gift giving activity for children received a lot of support from the staff's family and friends, the YP alumni network, as well as other private groups. TAO was able to assemble 225 holiday gift packs which were distributed to four partner communities in Angat, Bulacan; Binondo, Manila; Lupang Arenda, Taytay; and Tandang Sora, Quezon City from December 19 to 29 last year. Each gift consisted of a bag of kid's goodies and a family meal pack (noche buena food items). Food items in bulk were also given to two community associations in Rodriguez, Rizal.

## Donor support

A donation drive was started by TAO on November 3 initially targeting 140 gift packs for children. Those that responded to the call were mostly YP alumni and the personal acquaintances of TAO staff. In-kind contribution of food items were also solicited, with the QA team of

San Miguel Purefoods donating an assortment of milk and coffee products.

A generous donation from Project PEARLS helped TAO surpass its fundraising target. Project PEARLS is a non-profit NGO that primarily addresses poverty, hunger and access to education by providing scholarship, nutrition and healthcare support to children in poor communities.

## Gift distribution in communities

TAO coordinated with the respective HOAs in the communities to safely distribute the gift packs to children. Given the limited number of gifts, each HOA prepared a priority list of children in families that were most in need in their community.

On December 19 the first batch of gift packs were delivered to Masagana of Angat HOA and given to 45 children during the community's Christmas get together in Angat, Bulacan. The same day 50 gift packs were also delivered to PPVHOA community in Binondo and were distributed to children with the help of barangay personnel.

The children in APOLA community in Lupang Arenda got their turn on December 22. Eighty (80) children received their gift packs through the leaders of the three federations of APOLA. The last batch of 36 gift packs was given on December 29 to children in Tandang Sora with the help of the BEC leaders of Santuario de San Vicente de Paul Parish.

The excess food items that were not assembled into gift packs were sent to two community associations in Rodriguez, Rizal on December



APOLA leaders arrange gift packs for distribution to children in Lupang Arenda.



Gift packs for PPVHOA children delivered to community leaders in Binondo.



Mothers in Kasiglahan Village 1 in Montalban receive food items.



Masagana HOA distribute gift packs to children in Angat.

29. Boxes of milk and coffee products and kid's treat bags were handed over to Southville 8B HOA in San Isidro and to Montalban Action Group of Kasiglahan Village 1 in San Jose. These were distributed to 62 families in Southville and to 51 families in Kasiglahan on December 31.

## Typhoon Odette relief

With remaining funds for the gift giving activity, TAO also responded to a call from Philippine Misereor Partnership Inc. (PMPI) to provide

relief to families affected by super typhoon Odette (international name Rai). The powerful typhoon impacted Visayas and Mindanao on December 16 and caused severe damage, cutting off electricity and communication in many areas.

Through PMPI, TAO donated PHP24,000 for relief in Bohol and Homonhon Island in Eastern Samar. A separate amount of PHP 33,000 was given for relief in Negros Oriental.



## Christmas Gift Giving 2021 Summary



**PHP 171,905.00**

Cash contribution received



**PHP 68,821.90**

Equivalent in-kind contribution received



**225**

Gift packs distributed



1 bag of goodies for kids, pasta noodles for sauce, 1kg rice, cheese, canned meat loaf, tuna and mushroom, 1liter milk, and instant coffee packs

Gift pack items



**6**

HOA/Community partner recipients



**PHP 113,198.65**

Total expenses



**PHP 57,000.00**

Remaining funds donated to Typhoon Odette Relief for affected families in Bohol; Homonhon Island, Eastern Samar; and Negros Oriental

**FROM ALL OF US AT TAO, WE THANK YOU FOR THE  
GENEROSITY YOU'VE SHARED WITH OUR COMMUNITY  
PARTNERS AND DISASTER-AFFECTED FAMILIES!**

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PROJECT PEARLS



SAN MIGUEL PUREFOODS

# Three YPs complete their remote internship with TAO

by Angelus Maria Sales

THE YOUNG PROFESSIONALS (YP) Formation Project of TAO-Pilipinas accepted three students for OJT internship during the first semester (September 2021 – January 2022) of academic year 2021-2022. The three students were Beatrice Reyno and Lourraine Alerta, both from the Department of Social Work under the University of the Philippines College of Social Work and Community Development (UP CSWCD) and Trisha Masagca from College of Engineering and Architecture of Technological Institute of the Philippines – Quezon City (TIP-QC). With different internship outputs, the three interns worked remotely on activities related to Masagana community development in Angat, Bulacan.

Graduate student Lourraine Alerta had begun her internship during the previous semester. As part of her masteral degree requirement, she was tasked to come up with a social work practice model and pilot test this model for Masagana homeowners association (HOA). The model aims to help Masagana members who are still residing in Navotas to permanently transfer to the Angat resettlement site. During her internship, Lourraine helped in the

facilitation of some group meetings between Masagana HOA leaders, wrote an article about Masagana for the upcoming anniversary issue of the TAO Shelter Magazine, and conducted key informant interviews with Masagana members.

For Bea Reyno who is an undergraduate student of social work, she needed to undergo the different phases of community organizing work as part of the field course SW 151 (Social Work Field Instruction: Community Organizing). The remote placement was challenging but Bea communicated with Masagana HOA leaders through instant messaging system such as Facebook Messenger. She tried to assist Masagana leaders in their issue with the nearby oil refinery that has been causing health problems to the community due to the fumes being produced. Her final output was an integrative paper detailing her experience with Masagana community.

Trisha Masagca, on the other hand, is a BS Architecture student assigned to revise the chapel designs for Masagana community. She worked on the chapel design schemes for most of her internship, producing rendered 3D scaled models, floor plans, and cost estimates. Her home

Educational discussion/  
mobilization

## On right to health and pollution hazards



**Top photo:** Part of the presentation given by Bea Reyno during her final sharing.  
**Bottom photo:** Lourraine Alerta takes a selfie after her focus group discussion last March 6 with members of Masagana HOA who are still residing in Navotas.  
Photo source: Lourraine Alerta

university TIP requires her to finish 200 hours of internship work. During her first week, Trisha also assisted in generating social media content for TAO. She did some research on relevant articles pertaining to architecture, social issues, and environmental issues that can be shared in TAO's Facebook pages. She also joined the online reblocking workshop for Lupang Arenda as part of the documentation team.

### Challenges of remote internship and next steps

For the recently concluded semester, it was the first foray of the YP Formation Project into remote internship. Several challenges were encountered but most glaring is the difficulty in monitoring each student's work without face-to-face meetings and constant communication. Interns were given leeway in terms of keeping track of their actual hours worked and TAO supervisors relied on the honesty of the students as weekly reviews were not routinely followed. This pilot implementation of remote

internship has been limiting and TAO still needs to put in place systematic mechanisms to improve the quality of mentorship and internship output.

Two of the interns, Bea and Trisha, have completed their YP internship while Lourraine will extend her stint until the end of March 2022 to finish the piloting of her social work practice model. Lourraine has presented to her department at UP CSWCD the course paper titled, "Sama-sama: Remote Participatory Designing of Social Preparation Process with Masagana Community in Navotas".

Applications for the next batch of interns have started to trickle in but an in-depth assessment of remote OJT placement should be conducted before TAO continues to accept new batches of remote interns. Better modes of communication and an online monitoring system manageable to both supervisors and interns can be explored to keep track of interns' progress.



Moodboards submitted by Trisha Masagca for her initial chapel design proposal.



## TAO releases TSM 20th anniversary... *(continued from page 1)*

highlights the impacts of two decades of technical assistance on the ground and celebrates partnerships forged with communities and allies.

Current staff members contribute articles about TAO's past and present collaborations and projects. Rounding up the pool of writers are guest contributors Yolly Esguerra of Philippine Misereor Partnership Inc who pens a piece on rights-of-

nature and Commission on Human Right's Twyla Rubin who writes about gendered spaces. Joining the publication as magazine guest editors are Liliane Hobeica and Adib Hobeica, along with Gerald Nicolas as its layout artist.

TSM 20 is now available for purchase online on Amazon Kindle Store. Follow this [link](#) to get your copy of TSM 20.

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Sustainable human settlement development: Two decades of learning   Arlene Lusterio	Remembering the Katsana response and how it changed people's lives   Arlene Lusterio	TAO & SHFC: A partnership in enhancing communities' technical capacities for housing   Geraldine Matabang
Masagana: A story of sustainable human settlement   Lourraine Alerta	TAO's support for APOLA's fight for security of tenure   Angelus Sales	People's Plan Ville HOA: Advancing rights through community-led high-density housing   Therese Julia
Women leaders from TAO's community partners: Their stories, challenges, triumphs, and visions   Marianne Turiano	15 years hence: Echoes and ripples from TAO's YP training program   Geraldine Matabang and Min-Roselle Malunhao	#GirlPower: The inspiring women leaders behind TAO's Board of Trustees   Min-Roselle Malunhao and Marianne Turiano
Rights of Nature: A call to a loving and compassionate relationship with all creation   Yolanda Esguerra	Engendering spaces and development: Towards sustainable cities and communities   Twyla Rubin	

## TAO conducts end-of-project assessment... *(continued from page 3)*

Year 3 for PPVHOA was fraught with challenges with regards to their housing project (financed by the high-density housing program of SHFC). They had successfully created a people's plan for the in-city relocation of 200 member-families to a multi-story housing in Sta. Mesa with TAO facilitating the participatory planning and design process. The onset of the pandemic by year 2 delayed many project activities but PPVHOA managed to carry out actions with various stakeholders through online meetings. The leaders continued to move the project forward but the roadblock that halted any progress by year 3 were bureaucratic transactions between SHFC and GSIS (property owner) on land acquisition. Such setback has disheartened many PPVHOA members but the organization remains hopeful that the government agencies involved can expedite the housing process.

In their review of the project's target indicators, the PPVHOA assessment participants noted that community hazards awareness increased with their participation in planning activities. Though they have yet to realize their housing goals, the continued assistance from NGO partners are preparing them to create a disaster-resilient community in their relocation site. The project introduced them to RE technologies but the knowledge is still confined to PPVHOA leaders. The community's low-carbon practice is currently limited to waste segregation and recycling which are done with program support from the barangay. It was also incidental that bicycle use increased because of public transport restrictions during the pandemic. The participants called for more information dissemination on renewable energy and low-carbon communities. They pointed out the need for capability-building that will have practicable use in their daily life and in how they will manage community living when they resettle in Sta. Mesa.

### Community needs and ways forward

The assessment activities with the community partners provided a clearer perspective of the project effects in the



Day 2 of the community assessment for PPVHOA was a blended set-up where the community gathered in one venue while the facilitators were online.

Photo source: Annalyn Pigao

community. It was an opportunity for the HOAs to look back at what has been achieved so far, to consider the community situation and plan for the next steps towards the sustainability of achieved results. The community feedback also helped TAO-Pilipinas weigh up the accomplishments alongside the gaps and setbacks in project implementation, and determine what technical needs to respond to for the next project cycle.

In APOLA, a tricky path lays ahead in their struggle for security of tenure as the organization undertakes the heavy task of carrying out a reblocking plan for the massive settlement. For Masagana, addressing leadership and organizational issues is crucial to sustaining project gains and in planning for a prospective financing to aid site development. In PPVHOA, the second phase of their loan application and the construction of the 5-storey housing await once they hurdle the impasse caused by government bureaucracy. With continued funding for technical assistance, TAO looks forward to engaging POs and supporting community-led efforts to shape sustainable communities.

## How self-help construction... *(continued from page 1)*

The maximum amount of loan offered to community members was Php 121,412.00 each, so for a duplex structure with two households, this amount is only 27% of the total cost. Hence, the loan could only shoulder the provision of a core house wherein the structural members (square footings and tie-beams, columns, a beam, firewall, and roof framing) were prioritized. The roofing design was adjusted to match the budget and the expected status of completion of construction. Some members were able to supplement their ACCA housing loan with the SELAVIP grant worth Php 21,652.47 (500 USD). The SELAVIP grant was awarded to Masagana to alleviate the costs needed during resettlement of at least 60 members who were most in need. A portion of this fund was also accessed by some members while constructing their makeshift homes in the staging area.

### Loan Approval Process

By December of 2015, the required permits to commence house construction were released. Before they could begin the construction, a loan application process first needs to be fulfilled. The community members express their intent to apply for an ACCA housing loan with the leaders of the homeowners association (HOA). The applicant specifies the cost of loan, length of payment, and preferred amount of monthly amortization. The HOA leaders then review the membership status of the applicant, their community savings, lot payments, and ability to pay for the loan. When approved, the leaders attach an endorsement letter with the required documentation of the status of the member, household monthly expenses, valid IDs, and income payslip for submission to TAO-Pilipinas. TAO-Pilipinas then reviews the documents and drafts the contract and schedule of payment. Once the owner approves and signs the contract, the community member is allowed to commence lot staking.

### Labor Cost

The total budget for construction includes labor expenses, so the members negotiate with their selected contractor for the cost of the foundation,

column, beams, firewall, and roofing. The first batch of approved house construction was contracted by a fellow community member. The labor cost amounted to a maximum of Php50,000.00 for one duplex and Php25,000.00 for single-attached unit. Over time, the labor cost continued to vary but has steadily ranged from Php35,000.00 to Php40,000.00 for a single dwelling unit and Php 70,000.00 for one duplex.

Agreements with the contractors were the responsibility of the Masagana member. However, there were times when the contractor and member fail to reach an agreement and both parties consult TAO-Pilipinas about specific provisions and cost counterparts. In such cases, TAO-Pilipinas simply facilitates the negotiation, but it is still the member and the contractor who will finalize the cost and schedule of construction.

### Construction Materials

TAO-Pilipinas reviews the available budget of each community member before sending a purchase order to a supplier. There were instances where the members requested revisions to the bill of materials due to a myriad of reasons. In any case, TAO-Pilipinas evaluates the request and decides accordingly.

The members have been resourceful in sourcing the necessary materials to supplement the items purchased from their available budget. For example, whenever formworks were insufficient, the homeowner often recycled the lumber and plywood from their makeshift house or scavenged for used construction materials from junk shops. On the other hand, some members spared no expense in their houses. They were essentially allowed to decorate and finish their house as they pleased as long as they stuck to the design specifications.

### Permanent Core House Construction

Nine batches of core houses have been completed since staking and excavation for the first construction commenced in May 2016. The first batch included three duplex houses and one single-

attached. The next batch consisted of only one duplex. It was followed by the third batch with four single-attached; the fourth batch with two single-attached; and batches 5 and 6 with one single-attached each. The aforementioned batches were beneficiaries of the ACCA housing loan.

Meanwhile, three members who accessed the SELAVIP grant for the construction of their toilets were also included in the sixth batch while the sole member from the seventh batch accessed his SELAVIP fund for the construction of a makeshift house within their assigned lot. The next batch accessed the ACCA housing loan which consisted of one single-detached dwelling unit as the member requested. Finally, the ninth batch included ACCA housing loan beneficiaries for one duplex and one single detached, and a member who accessed only the SELAVIP grant to buy roofing

materials for their self-financed permanent core house.

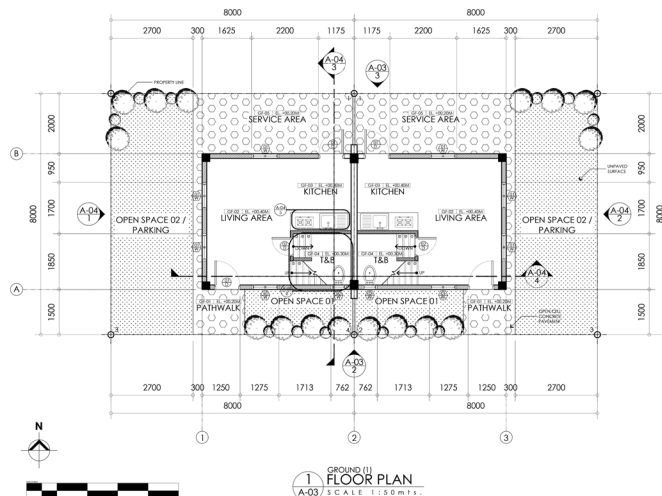
### Construction Supervision

The construction supervisor from TAO-Pilipinas visits the site at least twice a week during the early stages of construction until the concrete pouring of the foundation, columns, and beams are completed. The supervisor also visits the site as needed for urgent situations and for releasing weekly bills payment. Initially, only the construction of ACCA housing loan beneficiaries was regularly monitored by TAO. This is mainly because those who accessed their SELAVIP grant mostly built temporary structures only.

### Difficulties in Self-help Construction

The implementation of self-help house construction in Masagana was met with numerous

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**Top photo:** Ground floor plan of the duplex core housing for Masagana resettlement project designed by TAO-Pilipinas with Masagana HOA members.  
**Bottom photo:** House contractor and TAO supervisor check stake measurements and setback allowance before foundation excavation.



## How self-help construction... *(continued from page 8)*

difficulties. First were the errors in design and execution. The assembly of reinforcement bars (rebars) was difficult for the laborers because of the number of rebars required to either pass or terminate in a 150mm x 150mm column. At most, eight pieces of 16mm rebars and two pieces of 12mm rebars are required for a beam. Meanwhile, some members had to rectify their excavations because the contractor made a mistake reading the orientation of the floor plan.

Furthermore, erroneous actions of the contractors or laborers often occurred due to insufficient consultation with the construction supervisor from TAO-Pilipinas. There were some contractors who are negligent of proper procedures during construction. This includes off-center rebars of columns, honeycombs, and improper assembly, bends, splices and anchorage of rebars. Erroneous installation of plastic septic tanks also occurred due to their misgivings about the product. These types of incidents needed more effort to rectify. Engaging the members and contractors in discussion and explaining the science behind the design and better practices are usually enough to address the issue.

Additionally, instances where both the design and the BP 220 standards were not observed despite multiple reminders and warnings also occurred. One member had to acquire a separate permit for their construction since they deviated from the approved house design. The costs of rectifying these mistakes are a burden to the members. Admittedly, these were preventable if there was a construction supervisor assigned solely to the Masagana Resettlement Project. However, since it is a self-help approach, the project relies on the support and involvement of the members and of the community throughout the process.

Another difficulty is of the site condition. The soil is clayey and the excavations get flooded or caves in so the contractors rush the construction during rainy season (May to November). Unfortunately, it often coincides with the schedule of construction.

The timing of the delivery of materials is also crucial in construction. There had been instances where the construction is halted due to lack of materials. The rebars usually cause this delay especially if the particular construction batch is limited to only one to two dwelling units. The supplier orders the rebars in bulk and if the quota is not reached, the community needs to wait since the specified length and grade of rebar is not readily available in the local hardware.

The insufficient funds caused some structures to deteriorate while the members were saving enough money to continue the construction. Also, there was one member who abruptly abandoned their construction to relocate somewhere else. Another was removed from the community by the HOA due to negligence with their responsibilities as a member, after the construction materials were already delivered. Eventually, the loan contracts for the two cases of abandonment were transferred to other qualified members.

Lastly, the commitment of a community counterpart in progress monitoring of construction is critical in the implementation of self-help construction in low-income communities. With a tight budget, it is in the best interest of the community members to construct their houses efficiently. However, the pandemic, combined with the adjustment to a new leadership in the community, showed that Masagana has yet to establish a committed team of individuals who would spearhead the construction monitoring. The position requires accountability, commitment, and effective communication skills. An eye for construction is preferred but since the COVID-19 pandemic, TAO-Pilipinas constantly communicates with the construction monitor everyday so he/she can learn during the construction process.

### **Impact to the households**

Generally, the members are satisfied with their houses although they needed to adjust to the process of constructing permanent houses. They cite its sturdiness and, more importantly, the fact that they could call it their



**Left photo:** Homeowner representative and truck driver inspect reinforcement bars at the supplier warehouse before they are delivered to the site.



**Bottom photo:** Homeowners help in the construction work --- in mixing concrete and plastering walls.

own. The cost of construction was overwhelming for some, so they are biding their time despite the 2020 addendum to their ACCA housing loan contract. They are required to transfer to their houses within three months after their loan has been fully consumed or after the completion of their house, whichever comes first.

Additionally, the members became more observant of acceptable construction practices by their neighbors. They identify issues with the construction that were overlooked by construction monitors. They also raise these concerns to their HOA officers or to TAO-Pilipinas to maintain proper house building in the community.

### **Effects of the resettlement project to Masagana**

Overall, self-help construction in a low-income community contributed to Masagana's development. It improved their access to basic services due to the increased number of structures and residents which paved way for the entry of utilities in the site like water and electricity in 2017. From no permanent houses in 2015, twenty-two (22) have been constructed in Masagana with varying levels of completion. Meanwhile, other members now dwell in fifteen (15) temporary houses in the site. The members permanently residing in the community, including those who

are living in temporary houses, now total to twenty-five (25) households. About 17 households still remain in Navotas while 16 households are living in other locations like Caloocan and Quezon City.

The process for the ACCA housing loan approval was also improved to increase its efficiency and to better assess the requests for house construction, extension, or repair. This also avoids unsupervised construction and below-standard structures. Comparatively, the steps are now more clearly defined but the members have yet to appreciate it due to the increased documentation and stricter implementation of the construction policies.

Moving forward, preparation for the final batch of ACCA house loan beneficiaries (batch 10) has commenced and is anticipated to push through within the year. The community also aims to apply for a Community Mortgage Program (CMP) loan to facilitate their site development and to accommodate simultaneous house construction. Individual utility lines for all households are also being pursued by the community.

# TAO presents experiences on Remote Participatory Community Engagement at EAROPH 2021

LAST NOVEMBER 26, TAO-Pilipinas joined the Eastern Regional Organization for Planning and Human Settlements (EAROPH) regional conference hosted by EAROPH Philippines with the theme Hindsight: Mitigating the Issues of the Unknown. The virtual conference was hosted by VX Events through the Global-Link MP Events International and ran online until December 5. It was participated by EAROPH members from Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Australia, the Philippines, Pakistan and Indonesia.

The first panel on The Known Unknown: LuzViMinda presented case studies from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. The Luzon case study entitled “Rising above the Ashes of Mount Pinatubo” was presented by Robert Tantingco of Holy Angel University, an award winning screenplay writer. He reflected on how people coped during the Mt. Pinatubo eruption and compared it with the current experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. He described the heart-wrenching

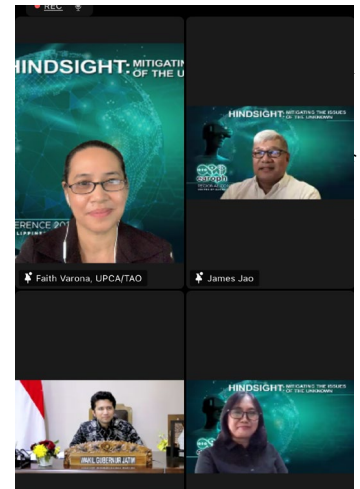
story of the people of Pampanga when Mt. Pinatubo erupted sans cellphone and social media attention, and how the people survived. He posed the critique and challenged how the present government could and should have done better with the current access to better communication technologies. The case study from Visayas was about “Community of Hope for Yolanda Survivors” by Base Build’s Joseph Emmanuel Lansang who introduced the bamboo reinforced wall panels manufactured by Base Build. The Mindanao case study was about the “Bangon Marawi Project” presented by Rowena P. Dineros of Task Force Bangon Marawi Secretariat.

Joining the panel on Housing Inequalities and Matters of Care, TAO Pilipinas board secretary Maria Y. Faith Varona and executive director Arlene Christy D. Lusterio talked about the topic “Remote Participatory Community Engagement”. Architects Varona and Lusterio shared their experiences in implementing participatory

community engagement before and during the pandemic. Use of technology and innovative applications made it possible to communicate and conduct consultations remotely. However, challenges remain with limited resources, age, and even internet signal.

Dr. Emil. E. Dardak, the vice governor of East Java Province talked about East Java’s plan to enhance city infrastructures to make it responsive to changing situations. The plan considered the use and design of open spaces, public buildings and additional considerations to make spaces responsive to a pandemic situation.

A presentation on “Learning from Taiwan’s Health Responses to the COVID-19” was presented by Dr. Lin Yung-Ching, a medical officer of Taiwan Center for Disease Control. Dr. Yung-Ching talked about strategy, policies and funding, giving emphasis on transparency of information and consideration for the most vulnerable including persons with disability.



Screenshot of the EAROPH conference attended by TAO founders, Faith Varona and Arlene Lusterio.

was attended by professionals—architects, engineers, environmental planners and scientists—and students. EAROPH holds its regional conference annually in different countries in the world. (ACDLusterio)

## WEBINAR TAKEAWAYS

### Green Development in Philippine Cities

Urban Transformation Working Group (UTWG) Learning Session | January 14, 2022 | 10:00AM - 12:00NN

This webinar formed part of a series of learning sessions of the Urban Transformation Working Group and conducted to help the group develop an urban transformation agenda. Veteran architect and environmental planner Dr. Nathaniel von Einsiedel gave the key lecture which focused on urban poverty, urban pollution and green development.

Dr. Einsiedel explained the basic framework of green development as ecosystem services. Green development can be applied for environmental responsiveness, resource

efficiency, and community and cultural sensitivity. These applications can be implemented in projects of every scale and type to help make cities inclusive and sustainable. Solutions can be found in land-use planning, building design and construction, and infrastructure development including nature-based solutions. Key takeaways from the lecture were that environmental policies should be integrated at all levels of governance and the public must demand green development. Public education and demonstration projects are important elements of promoting green development, he stressed.



An open forum followed the lecture and the group talked about some of the related issues on floodplain management, green building codes, and social housing requirements. Green development concepts such as

sponge cities were also discussed, with Dr. Einsiedel emphasizing the need for local governments to increase the open space supply of cities. (GRMatabang)



## Moving Forward: New Horizons and Synergies for Ecosystem-based Adaptation

International Climate Initiative (IKI) and German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) |  
January 25, 2022 | 10:00PM-2:30AM and  
January 26, 2022 | 6:00PM-10:00PM



The two half-days of virtual workshop about ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) featured various settings for learning and exchange. It included plenary presentations, breakout parallel sessions, and a virtual marketplace for project posters and networking. The first day of the workshop looked at the key aspects of EbA and the interlinked challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss while the second day focused on new developments and priorities for implementation of nature-based solutions (NbS) for climate adaptation. The workshop clarified that NbS is an umbrella term covering a multitude of solutions and under which EbA falls (i.e. EbA is an example of NbS for adaptation).

Attendees were limited to participating in only a few of the lined-up presentations since breakout sessions were held simultaneously. Some of the interesting topics included gender-responsive EbA implementation, EbA in soil/ land management, agroecology, EbA in national policies, and climate justice lens in EbA. There were also sessions that introduced participants to online databases that can be accessed to know more about regional and local solutions and EbA tools (e.g. PANORAMA website and the EbA Tools Navigator). These were very useful information especially to newcomers in the EbA learning phase. (GRMatabang)

## Not Voiceless, But Unheard: Exploring the role of youth in COP and beyond

The Climate Reality Project Philippines |  
November 13, 2021 | 4:00PM - 6:00PM

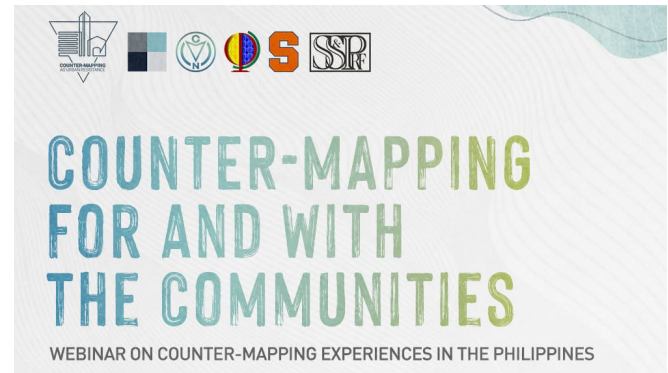


This webinar by The Climate Reality Project Philippines features a panel discussion on various issues in climate policy-making and how the results of the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) will affect the youth and other vulnerable sectors. It was

joined by youth climate advocates and representatives from Parabukas, Youth Advocates for Climate Action Philippines (YACAP), C40 Global Youth & Mayors Forum (C40 GYMF), United Nations Youth Advisory Board (UNYAB), and Youth Strike 4 Climate Philippines.

## Counter-mapping for and with the communities

UP Department of Geography |  
January 24, 2022 | 5:00PM



As part of the *Counter-mapping as Urban Resistance Seminar Series*, this webinar oriented the viewers on what counter-mapping is and how it facilitates community involvement and confronts injustices by contesting dominant modes of mapping.

Prof. Arnisson Andre Ortega introduced counter-mapping as an act of resistance against the various ways institutions have used mapping to “reproduce hegemonic structures and practices.” In development projects, for example, maps rendered by the government or private sector often obscure spaces of resistance. Counter-mapping sheds light on contested geographies where affected communities face displacement and dispossession. Through co-production of geographic information, counter-mapping highlights the voices of marginalized communities—often deliberately silenced to serve dominant interests—as they fight for their right to remain in their lands.

Three presentations tackled case studies of counter-mapping for and with marginalized groups facing various forms of violence and harassment concomitant with development aggression. Prof. Ma. Simeona Martinez talked about the plight of farmers in Hacienda Luisita; Prof. Yany Lopez conveyed the experiences of indigenous peoples (Aeta) and farmers impacted by New Clark City; and researchers Bernardino Dela Cruz, Jr. and Leonardo Miguel Garcia discussed the dangers faced by human rights defenders (HRDs) in Negros Island.

The webinar underscored how counter-mapping, as an act of resistance, confronts dominant spatial narratives that often conceal critical issues from the public (e.g., land struggles at the margins of the next ‘green city’). Beyond communicating grounded information, counter-mapping advocates for social justice by foregrounding the lived experiences and geographical narratives of marginalized communities. (TRJulia)

The first part of the webinar explored the importance of youth representation in climate policy formulation; the highlights and outcomes of COP26; and where COP26 stands in terms of inclusivity and representation. The participants also weighed in on the conference discussions. They noted gaps such as the lack of urgency and very limited inclusivity and representation of the youth and other sectors in the actual decision-making processes. In the second part, the participants discussed what the youth can do to move climate action forward. They tackled existing climate actions and

the next steps for their respective youth organizations. The participants also highlighted the importance of systemic and individual change in climate advocacy and activism, as well as the promotion of indigenous knowledge in protecting the environment.

Overall, the webinar offers an insightful conversation around the urgency of the climate crisis. The integral role and contributions of the youth towards climate justice need to be recognized and considered in policy engagements. (MCTuriano)

Title: **Participate: Designing with User-Generated Content**

Author: **Helen Armstrong and Zvezdana Stojmirovic**

Publisher: **Princeton Architectural Press (2011)**

*Participate* explores the shift in design practice toward user-driven design particularly in the graphic design profession. The book also looks at how designers have learned to adapt amid the rise of amateur creatives made possible by open source design tools and social media. Published a decade ago, the book may seem outdated considering subsequent technological developments. Even so the topics explored here are helpful in understanding the fundamental approaches to participatory design.

The book is organized in four chapters corresponding to the different aspects of participatory design – Community, Modularity, Flexibility, and Technology. Each chapter has a critical essay focusing on a particular aspect and is illustrated with plenty of sample design works influenced by participatory culture and the open source movement. It is filled with well-presented case studies of participatory projects involving

typography, branding campaign design, and interactive installations. Interesting student projects from Maryland Institute College of Art (where the authors teach) also provide a lot of ideas on harnessing engagement and content.

In-depth interviews with leading graphic designers within each chapter offer rich insights on the transforming role of designers. Designers do not merely create a fixed, completed layout but are expected to create a system that allows participants to create or design other outputs. They also acknowledge the challenges to participatory design including the relinquishing of design control in a process-oriented approach and avoiding losing agency to technology especially in algorithmic systems.

*Participate* is an enjoyable read, as it is well written and illustrated. As an architect-practitioner of participatory design, this book resonated with me



even though many of the examples are abstract works in graphic design. Readers may find inspiration from discussions about the democratization of design and on participatory design as dialogue, with messaging that “replaces monologues with conversations”. It presents designers as community builders by setting up platforms for engagement that allow users to connect, contribute and co-create. (GRMatabang)

Title: **Darwin Comes to Town: How the urban jungle drives evolution**

Author: **Menno Schilthuizen**

Publisher: **Picador (2018)**

Urban ecologist Menno Schilthuizen offers readers a fresh and curious peek at the urban plants and animals that we encounter walking through city streets as he describes the fascinating evolutionary processes happening in cities. The book takes us through exciting anecdotes of how organisms have adapted to human-made urban environments throughout the world—moths changing wing color for camouflage; crows taking advantage of passing traffic to crack nuts; blackbirds singing at higher pitch or at night to avoid daytime traffic noise; lizards with limbs adapted to concrete wall and metals as urban perches; grass and flowers developing tolerance to heavy metals; spiders possibly forming an attraction to artificial light at night (ALAN).

Schilthuizen shows us observable urban evolution and that it is happening

fast, induced by human innovations. It is more of a positive look at urban evolution, giving us examples of successful adaptations to urban heat island, noise, light and chemical pollution and choosing not to highlight loss of biodiversity due to urbanization (eg road traffic or ALAN-related insect deaths), though this is acknowledged by the author. The book focuses on shaping urban ecosystems with wildlife that can carve niches for themselves in cities and the ways that humans can create cityscapes for cohabiting plants and animals.

The last chapter of the book (Design it with Darwin) is of interest to architects and urban planners. Schilthuizen poses the question, ‘Can we harness the power of urban evolution in nature-inclusive architecture and design?’ With the perspective of an evolutionary biologist,



he offers enlightening guidelines for an “evolutionary informed urban nature planning” to drive the evolution of urban life. (GRMatabang)



## ANNOUNCEMENT

Last February 25, our dear mentor Fr. Jorge Anzorena celebrated his 92nd birthday. Here are the birthday greetings that we gathered last month from our Instagram and Facebook pages after posting our birthday message:

A blessed birthday Fr. Jorge. We wish you great health and more blessings so that you can continue to be a blessing to others. We love you.

EDRA BELGA

Happy birthday Fr. Jorge! I'm grateful to have met someone so inspiring. Enjoy your day!

LORENA HERNANDEZ

You've spent your many birthdays with us here before and every time you were the giver of gifts—from those cute trinkets from Japan for us TAO ladies, to your inspiring stories that remind us why we are doing this work. We miss you and wish you the happiest birthday always!

GERALDINE MATABANG

Happy birthday Fr. Jorge!

ROMEO MANDREZA

Happy birthday, Fr. Jorge! Please stay safe and healthy. It's always happy memories with you. Keep on inspiring people like us. P.S. I miss your pasalubong!

VERNA SARRAGA

Happy birthday Fr. Jorge.

DIANE ANTIPUESTO

Happiest birthday to a dear mentor, Fr. Jorge Anzorena. Your passion to help marginalised communities had inspired generations of architects and other technical professionals to work for the empowerment of these communities. Your cheerful and warm smiles are my favourite memories from your yearly visit to us aside from your stories. I wish you continuous good health. We miss you Fr.!

ANGELUS SALES



Eduardo Jorge Anzorena  
Born: 25 February 1930

As we remember the 36th year of EDSA revolution on February 25, another equally important celebration for someone very important to TAO is happening. **Fr. Eduardo Jorge Anzorena, SJ is celebrating his 92nd birthday!** He is our role model, an inspiration, a mentor, a listener, a friend who will always remind us about humility and the love of God and the connection of all our mundane work to the Source. Like many of us in TAO-Pilipinas, he is an architect, and he loves to work with poor people.

In his younger years he would spend his birthday in the Philippines visiting communities to hear the stories of people's struggles and successes in their journey towards a better life. **One of those days will always be spent with TAO-Pilipinas.** As we share the stories of our projects, he also shares the different stories of people he met in other parts of the world, many to inspire and give insight on how we too could do better in our work. Most of those stories bear witness to the power of the people and the unquenchable fire to live a better life.

Among his many accolades are global recognitions of his commitment to the work he loves to do:

1988 - The International Year of Shelter for the Homeless Award from the Japan Housing Association  
1994 - Ramon Magsaysay Award for International Understanding in **recognition of his efforts to foster a collaborative search for humane and practical solutions to the housing crisis among Asia's urban poor.**

1996 - Premio Francisco García Vázquez al Arquitecto Solidario (Francisco García Vázquez Prize to the Solidarity Architect) by the Mutual Association Central Society of Architects (Amsca) the annual award that distinguishes **an architect for his work for the benefit of the community.**  
2021 - Kazuhiro Kojima Special Award, in recognition of him as the **"sole Jesuit priest who mastered the architectural planning methods of Japan and gave his life for the grassroots movement... to defend the human right to shelter".**

Dear Fr. Jorge,

As you can't be with us this year and some three years ago, we have been missing you dearly. As you celebrate your 92nd birthday, we send these greetings and wishes to you to liven up your day. Remembering you on your birthday and always.

from all of us in TAO-Pilipinas. 🍷



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**SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2021**