

APRIL-MAY 2009

ypp e-newsletter

TAO-Pilipinas Young Professionals Program



Open wells become the source of bathing water for families that cannot afford to have household water connections in a resettlement area in the Bicol province (*photo by Ge Matabang*). Worldwide, around 900 million people still rely on unimproved drinking-water supplies and 2.5 billion people still remain without improved sanitation facilities (Source: *WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation*).

Access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation facilities are issues that have always emerged in the YP Workshops' community consultations since we started the training program in 2005. Constantly identified as a problem area in social housing projects, the lack of water supply and sanitation (wat-san) services keep these communities, even with the provision of core housing units, blighted and unsustainable. How can designers successfully integrate wat-san issues in social housing? What low-cost design interventions can be applied to improve access to wat-san services in urban poor communities? What existing community resources can be tapped to prevent negative environmental and health impacts arising from unsafe water and unsanitary living conditions? These are just some of the questions participants will try to address as we focus on wat-san issues for this year's YP Orientation Workshop on Social Housing. The YP Workshop aims to provide a learning opportunity for young architects, engineers, and planners and explore sustainable solutions through participatory approaches and direct community interaction.

You can support this initiative by sponsoring the participation of young professionals and students in the training program scheduled on October 2009. A PhP6,000 (USD125) donation will enable one young professional to complete the program and provide design services to communities in need. (For more information about the YP Workshops, please visit www.ypws.tao-pilipinas.org.)

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by Franz Miko Verzon

quote this month

"Architecture is always a temporary modification of space, of the city, of the landscape... We think that its permanent. But we never know."

- Jean Nouvel, French architect and winner of the 2008 Pritzker Prize

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

TAO participates in 14th IUSAM in Taiwan

The 14th Inter-University Seminar on Asian Megacities (IUSAM), with the theme "Asian Megacities in the 21st Century, Environmental Challenges to Architecture, Urban Planning and Governance", was held at the GIS Convention Center, National Taiwan University (NTU), Taipei City, Taiwan. The NTU Graduate Institute of Building and Planning hosted this conference last March 12-14, 2009, and was attended by eighty-five (85) delegates from participating universities in different megacities of Asia.

Around forty-four (44) research papers relevant to the theme were presented by students and faculty members from the following universities: Chinese University of Hongkong, Hanyang University, Keio University, National Taiwan University, Pacific National University of Khabarovsk, Seoul National University, Tsinghua University, University of the Philippines and University of Tokyo. TAO-Pilipinas, having previous undertakings with NTU and UP College of Architecture (UPCA), was also invited to present research projects carried out by some of its staff members. Faith Varona, Research and Publications Program Coordinator, presented the documentation of TAO-Pilipinas' experience in facilitating the access of poor communities to decent housing and security of tenure through participatory community-based processes. Rosalyn Marcelo, Young Professionals Program Staff, shared the results of her master's thesis, which aims to improve the integration of resettler families and host communities through service infrastructure sharing. Students from the NTU Graduate Institute of Building and Planning also presented the results of their fieldwork study conducted in the Philippines, which focused on the collaborative and participatory planning processes of poor communities located in Pasay City. *(Related article can be viewed from YP E-newsletter Aug2008 issue)*



The research presentations were categorized into the following sessions: Sustainable Community and Energy Conservation; Urban Development, Expansion and Renewal; Resettlement and Affordable Housing; Participatory Planning and Place Identity; Historical Architecture; Spatial Pattern and Design; City Image and Place Identity; Landscape and Open Space; Landscape and Public Space; and Disaster Management, Modeling and Education. Delegates were also able to visit the Xinyi Planning Districts where Taipei 101, the world's tallest building today, is located and to the historical sites of Fort San Domingo and Danshui Old Street and Waterfront.

The next IUSAM will tentatively focus on waterfront development and is scheduled to take place in Tokyo, Japan around March 2010.

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Blessing of CARDD Muscovado Mill held in Batangas



Top: The processing area showing steam fuelled boiling tanks and cooling tables;
Bottom: TAO rep Guinivere Lucero receives the plaque of appreciation.

The Center for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (CARRD) held the blessing of its Muscovado Sugar Processing Plant back-to-back with the Muscovado Stakeholders Forum in Barangay Caybunga, Balayan, Batangas last March 13, 2009.

Considered as the first small-scale muscovado sugar processing plant in the country, the CARRD Muscovado Mill aims to support the production of organic muscovado sugar for NAGKASAMA (Nagkakaisang Mamamayan sa Kanlurang Batangas), a cooperative of sugarcane farmers' federation from the municipalities of Balayan and Tuy in Batangas. NAGKASAMA, with support from CARRD, aims to engage in organic sugarcane farming.

Turn to page 3.

Blessing of CARRD... (from page 2)

The plant process flow was designed with support from the Department of Science and Technology - Industrial Technology Development Institute (DOST-ITDI). TAO-Pilipinas designed the plant building following the Criteria for Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP).

The Muscovado Stakeholders Forum was a presentation of the upgraded design technology and organic muscovado sugar production process and market potentials. Also presented were the remaining phases of the project, in its application for GMP compliance and Hazard and Critical Control Points (HACCP) certification.

The celebration ended with the presentation of plaques of appreciation to CARRD partner organizations.

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Swedish International Program on Conservation and Management of Historic Buildings organized in the Philippines

International participants of an advanced training program in Lund, Sweden continued the fourth (4th) phase of their Conservation and Management of Historic Buildings (CMHB) course in Metro Manila. This two-part global program of Lund University's Housing and



Development Management (HDM) Department was carried out in collaboration with their Department of Architectural Conservation and Restoration, and locally coordinated by TAO-Pilipinas. The event ran from March 9-20, 2009, mainly at the Imperial Palace Suites in Tomas Morato, Quezon City and with study visits in the historic town of Taal, Batangas and the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Vigan City, Ilocos Sur.

This was the third batch of international delegates this year where Lund University worked in partnership with TAO-Pilipinas, to coordinate the local activities of the participants (*see related article in YP E-newsletter Mar2009 issue*). This regional continuation of the course in the Philippines was handled by Maria Isabel Rasmussen from Lund-HDM Department, and facilitated locally by TAO program coordinators Faith Varona and Beryl Baybay. There were 25 participants, mostly from Latin America, Asia, Africa, Middle East, and the Balkans.

Local experts on historic conservation and management were invited to put the CMHB course into proper context, including lectures on Filipino architecture, urban development and planning and presentations of local conservation and management initiatives of various institutions and groups in the country. For the study visits, the participants explored the town of Taal in Batangas City and the Unesco World Heritage sites of Vigan City in Laoag, Ilocos Sur and Paoay Church in Ilocos Norte. In Metro Manila, they went to the walled city of Intramuros in Manila, the University of Sto. Tomas Campus, National Museum and the National Historical Institute.

It was also during this CMHB phase in Manila where the participants presented and finalized their papers or proposals for change that they plan to undertake in their home countries, either individually or through their respective organizations or institutions.

For more information about the course, you may visit http://www.hdm.lth.se/education/international_training_programmes/conservation_and_management_of_historic_buildings/

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New York-based volunteer raises funds for TAO project

Neil Medel, a Filipino based in New York, turned-over a total of USD 2,000 as donation to TAO-Pilipinas in support of Potty Project, an initiative which seeks to improve access to sanitation in urban poor communities in Metro Manila. The donation is part of the funds collected by Neil from organizing a fundraising party in New York in August 2008 and selling t-shirts. He organised the events with the help of his friends and his "Couchsurfers" group who are members of the couchsurfing.com community.



From left: Angel Sales, Rosalyn Marcelo, Marjee Dizon, Neil Medel, and Ge Matabang

Neil has been doing volunteer work for other non-profit groups like HOPE Worldwide and New York Cares and sees raising funds to support socially-oriented projects as a way "to inspire others and to have as many people as possible get involved and to create awareness (of what's happening back home)."

Neil recently visited Manila and TAO staff members were finally able to meet its online-volunteer last April at the YP Design Challenge Exhibit in Crowne Plaza. The funds raised by Neil and his friends will be used by TAO-Pilipinas in a project that will help build public toilets for selected urban poor communities.



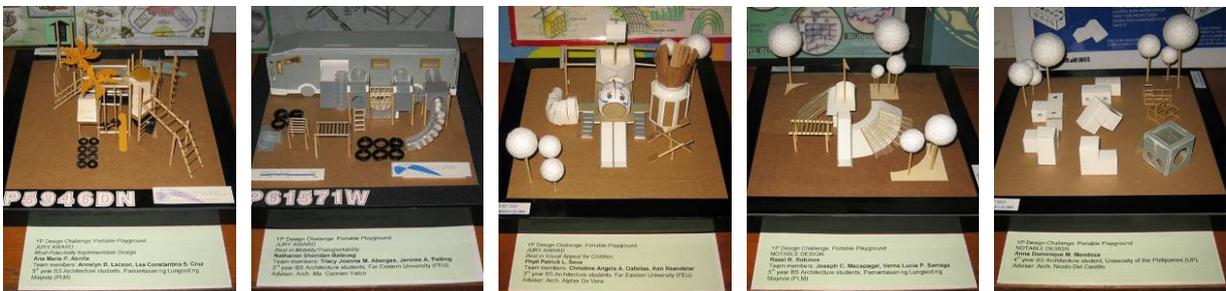
IN PICS: YP Design Challenge Exhibits



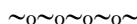
March 30, 2009: UP-ALL Anniversary, ISO-Ateneo Campus, Quezon City



April 21, 2009: PHILSSA's DFID Project Launch, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Pasig City

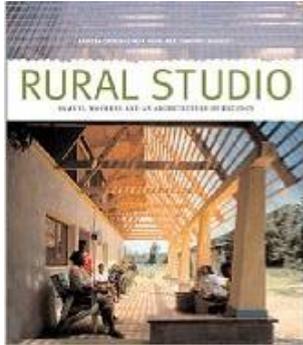


April 22, 2009: PHILSSA Anniversary, ISO-Ateneo Campus, Quezon City



YP Reading List

Every month, the YP e-newsletter features a selection of TAO Resource Center & Library materials as reviewed by TAO staff and volunteers. The TAO Resource Center & Library is now open for students and researchers' use. Library use is by appointment and guidelines may be viewed at <http://www.tao-pilipinas.org/resources/library>. You may call Angel Sales at 441-0998/436-7301 or email lib@tao-pilipinas.org to schedule your visit.

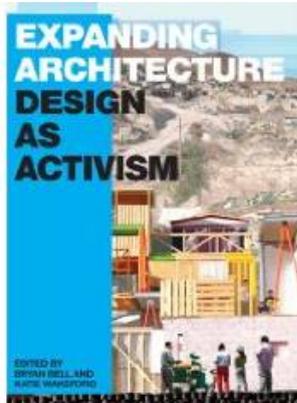


Title: **Rural Studio: Samuel Mockbee and An Architecture of Decency**
Author/s: **Andrea Oppenheimer Dean and Timothy Hursley**
Publisher: **Princeton Architectural Press (2002)**

Samuel Mockbee (1944-2002) is one of the pioneers of socially responsible architecture and founder of Rural Studio, an architectural studio program run by Auburn University School of Architecture. In this book, the author Andrea Dean chronicles the work of Rural Studio wherein students design-build homes and community facilities for some of the poorest people in Hale County, Alabama, one of the most impoverished counties in the US. Photographs by Tim Hursley document the different projects undertaken by the program from 1994 to 2001, including houses, chapels, pavilions, sheds, a playground and baseball field, and community centers.

The book showcases the body of work of Rural Studio guided by Mockbee's philosophy of architecture as a merger of esthetics and ethics. The projects featured in the book, made more meaningful and moving with accounts of the student-volunteers and clients working on the projects, reflect Mockbee's conviction that an architect should have a 'moral sense' of service to a community. The building designs are striking and show sustainable design through the ingenious use of recycled materials such as salvaged lumber and bricks, discarded tires, old license plates, colored bottles, and waste cardboard bales. It is also interesting to note that most of Hursley's photographs show the houses as they have been lived in, including belongings and other additions made by the residents.

Students and practitioners who see architecture both as a fine art and a social service will find inspiration in this book. Design educators can also learn from the experience of Rural Studio in giving students not only hands-on learning (second year students typically move to Hale County for one semester and help build a charity home while thesis students stay for an entire year to design and complete a community project) but more importantly, in instilling social responsibility and compassion towards the poor. *(Geraldine Matabang)*



Title: **Expanding Architecture: Design As Activism**
Editors: **Bryan Bell and Katie Wakeford**
Publisher: **Metropolis Books (2008)**

Expanding Architecture is a compilation of 33 essays on *architectural activism* or how creative design can serve as catalyst to address social issues and effect change. The book is edited by Bell and Wakefield, both of Design Corps, a US-based non-profit organization that provides community service through architecture. It is organized into eight chapters that highlight the experiences of various groups working towards a more socially-responsive design practice. Much of the contributing authors' works are representative of experiences in the United States but there are also featured projects from Mexico, Taiwan, and Spain.

The collection clearly establishes the links between social justice and sustainable design and provides a multitude of ideas on participatory design and community-based collaboration, new innovations in prefabricated housing, different approaches to low-income housing and community development projects, and housing prototypes derived from design competitions. There are also many articles about university-run design-build studio programs that emphasize community service, interdisciplinary design and experiential learning for students.

The book presents a growing movement within the professional design community and emerging models for design practice. It challenges design professionals to take a more proactive role in society, see social, economic and environmental issues as relevant "design issues", and direct their focus on meeting the needs of underserved populations. Many of the issues included in the book however, focus on the situation of relative poverty in the United States and lacks representative projects from third-world Asian and African countries. (Perhaps architects from this part of the world should publish a similar compilation of good practices in service-focused design.) Nevertheless, the varied efforts in making design serve the greater public, as documented in this book, act as eye-openers and as a motivational push for designers who would want to establish an alternative career path. A chapter on the "transformative power of architectural education" show how some architecture schools have developed progressive curriculum with programs integrating university-community partnerships and exposing students to become citizen-architects. Lessons from the field and discussions on the design processes undertaken by the contributing authors are presented with beautiful photographs and illustrations. With exemplary works that inspire and are potentially replicable, this book should be required reading for design educators and students alike and for those looking for meaning in their design practice. *(Geraldine Matabang)*



Title: **A Companion to Teachers**
 Author: **Melannie Svoboda**
 Publisher: **St Pauls, Bandra, Mumbai (2001)**

Melannie Svoboda is a Sister of Notre Dame, and staff of the Jesuit Novitiate for Detroit and Chicago provinces. She is the author of over 200 articles that have appeared in many popular Christian publications.

A Companion To Teachers is a small book (only 4" x 6.5") and so like a real companion, it is easy to bring with you anywhere and can be read even while on queue or waiting. Because the author is a nun, it is full of spiritual advice and insights, encouragement, and inspiring stories for teachers based on her actual experience both from the formal classroom setting and informal setting outside - the big world. This book could help teachers deepen their understanding of their role as teachers. It has 45 sections and each is followed by questions for reflection. The author also gives out some suggested practice tips to improve their method of teaching and their interpersonal (with students, co-teachers) and intrapersonal relationships. The prayerful reflections, based on Christian values and teachings, will also remind teachers that their work is both art and ministry, as well as a grace-filled privilege.

The book presents teaching as the world's oldest profession (contrary to others pronouncing that its prostitution) and encompasses the formal school setting as well as the informal setting, like when parents teach their children skills and values. The author considers the first teacher as God; Adam and Eve as the first students; Eden as the first classroom; and Adam & Eve's offspring as their children-students. Mankind is expected to be one another's keepers and the responsibility of teaching is passed on from generation to generation. Although the book is addressed to teachers, the principles discussed will surely help everyone from all walks of life regardless of age. It serves as a useful reference on how to handle the everyday challenges that come along in accomplishing that noble role of a teacher which each of us has to play in life. (*Gertrudes Samson*)

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YP Reflections



Franz Miko Verzon is a second-year student of BS Architecture at the University of Santo Tomas. As a YP summer intern, he is currently working on two TAO projects, *SHEC Phase 3 Housing* and *Technical Assistance to Food for the Hungry*. Miko was also the youngest finalist in the 2008 YP Design Challenge - Sustainable Shelter category.

My experience in TAO-Pilipinas was a beautiful one not only because of the beautiful people that I have met but also the beautiful experiences that I have encountered, even in the most unfortunate places I have been to. It needs a certain kind of appreciation to be able to find the attractiveness in these small and low-cost houses. This experience made me appreciate architecture more. This made me realize that architecture is not a matter of how large your building is or how the structures you create impress other people but it is in your own world of designing things or structures that makes you satisfied. In your world wherein everything that exists is taken into consideration, everything evolves around architecture. You cannot sacrifice one thing for the other.

As a second year student, of course, I don't know a lot, but with my apprenticeship here, I have learned many things. I tried to explore what that "world" is, the world of architecture for the urban poor communities. Well, this world is a fun one. I had the chance to design something out of the smallest amount of money possible which gives you your sense of creativity.

Weekdays, I wake up every morning, take a bath then leave for work. 9 in the morning is my call-time in the office and 6 in the evening is my... dismissal time. The staff taught me different new things that relate to constructing low-cost houses and I might say, they also have given me knowledge of the typical household chores. In my opinion, this is one of the things that students like me needs to learn. Well at least you can apply this knowledge to designing the circulation of people in service areas.

During the weekends, I either do my homework from my boss, Architect Lusterio, or go to different sites. Well I had a more fun time in visiting the sites because it is where I go to see rare Pokemons, I mean rare structures. I love it. I love every piece of it.

Some of the things I do are a little of everything, architectural designing and drafting, structural conceptualization, bill of materials, cost estimates and many others. During site visits, I try to observe and analyze things, the environment, to be able to grasp things outside the academics.

I had already taken one step in fulfilling my dream towards becoming an architect. And it is through TAO-Pilipinas where I discovered all of this stuff. I still have one month to go and yet it feels that I have already learned more than the others. From now on, I will get serious with my work and I hope that even after my remaining one month, I would still be able to work with this organization.

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Miko documents an informal structure in Rodriguez, Rizal for the technical assistance project to FHP.



Miko at the exhibit of winning and notable entries of YP Design Challenge