

JUNE-JULY 2010

# ypp e-newsletter

TAO-Pilipinas Young Professionals Program



Children take a late afternoon break amidst rice fields in Taytay, Rizal province while looking out into the skyscrapers of Metro Manila. (photo by Ge Matabang)

With the inauguration of P.Noy and appointment of the new administration officials, the last months have been eventful episodes in our country. There is much optimism now but it would take a great deal of work from each of us to get to that *daang matuwid*. So the work continues also for TAO, and we're still on the look-out for qualified full-time staff to help us carry out community-led projects and develop community training modules. If you're interested (and preferably a female architect or civil engineer), email us at [info@tao-pilipinas.org](mailto:info@tao-pilipinas.org).

In this newsletter are updates on our projects, networking activities and some thoughts from YP summer interns.

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## quotes this month

*"Creativity starts when you cut a zero from your budget. If you cut two zeros, it's much better."*

*"The main purpose of development should be quality of life for the large majority of people. If you don't have a generous view of cities, then you don't have a generous view of people."*

- **Jaime Lerner**, an architect-urban planner turned politician who has served three terms as mayor of Curitiba and two terms as governor of Parana, Brazil. He calls his approach to the revitalization of cities as *urban acupuncture*.

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



## 7 YPs complete summer internship

SEVEN TRAINEES FINISHED THEIR SUMMER internship at TAO-Pilipinas with a culminating activity held at the Blacksoup Cafe + Artspace in Maginhawa Street, Sikatuna Village on June 8, 2010. Verna Lucia P. Sarraga, Jan Michael V. Lumbang, Deanna Veronica R. Haduca, John Anthony C. Sayson, Rowel N. Lucilo, Jose Larino S. Bengson Jr., and Razel R. Robines each presented their internship outputs to their project mentors and stakeholders. The TAO staff was joined by invited guests representing TAO's project partners (SHEC, MASAGANA, COPE, and DAMPA, and COPE) that helped with the interns' community integration.



Sarraga presented her housing design schemes for MASAGANA; Lumbang outlined the results of his research on MRB (medium-rise building) as public housing; Haduca presented her research on settlements along Manggahan Floodway; Sayson discussed engineering principles for disaster-resilient building designs; Lucilo, Bengson and Robines presented their schematic designs of 15 structures for the SHEC Eco-Farm project.

The event also served as the interns' graduation ceremony. TAO-Pilipinas awarded their certificates of completion and afterwards hosted a farewell dinner for the interns. One of the interns, architecture graduate Verna Sarraga, has been absorbed as TAO program staff and is now working on HSE projects. *(Ge Matabang)*

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## Youth Urban Gardens launched in 5 communities

TAO-PILIPINAS OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED ITS URBAN GARDENING ACTIVITY IN FIVE (5) METRO MANILA COMMUNITIES LAST May as a continuation of its Community-Based Solid Waste Management workshop given on December 2009. Youths from these 5 communities were given classroom training on Sustainable Agriculture and Urban Gardening on April 2010 as a preparation for this launch *(see article on April-May 2010 e-newsletter)*.

Each youth group from the communities of Bagong Silangan, Parola, Pasay, Tanza-Masagana Area and Tangos followed a rotating schedule to visit the other communities to offer support and to assist in the vegetable planting efforts. This also served as an opportunity for the youths to glimpse the living conditions "on the other side of the fence". Only youths who have participated in the 2 previous workshops organized by TAO were included in this activity so that they can integrate all that they have learned and to have continuity in their learning curve. Before each visit, each group had to identify a good location for their urban garden, materials they will need, the support they would like from their respective barangay or from TAO, and their counterpart contribution. Material requirements, once approved by TAO, will be provided to them courtesy of a grant from Starbucks Social Entrepreneurs Fund through Give2Asia Foundation.



Each community was given 1 compost tumbler, 3 sacks of soil and 5 trowels. Seeds and some soil were previously distributed during their earlier workshop. Communities with more challenging planting spaces were provided with bamboo, ropes and nets. As their counterpart, each community sourced their own pots or seed-

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# Regional Meeting of Community Architects held in Chiang Mai, Thailand

HOSTED BY ASIAN COALITION FOR HOUSING RIGHTS (ACHR) AND COMMUNITY ACT NETWORK (CAN), some 120 community architects and technical professionals from 23 countries all over the world gathered in historic Chang Mai on 11-17 June 2010, to share experiences and plan out regional and national actions to strengthen the network and enhance local initiatives.

Ten participants from the Philippines joined the meeting composed of community technical professionals from HPFPI-PACSI (Davao, Iloilo, Bicol), JF Ledesma Foundation, Panirahanan, and TAO-Pilipinas; and 2 community leaders.

With the theme, “*Be the change you want to see in Chumchon (community)*,” the meeting covered presentations and sharing on five thematic issues: city planning and urban regeneration, small scale upgrading and people’s initiatives, comprehensive upgrading, recovery from disaster, and heritage for people. A keynote was delivered by Kirtee Shah defining “what community architects do and do not do” and “who are community architects”. Study visits were organized to heritage sites/restoration projects, Baan Mankong projects and historical temples in a bus ride from Bangkok to Chang Mai.



Opening ceremonies at the umbrella hall in Chang Mai University

The activity ended with the presentation of plans from each region (Asia Pacific Continental – Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia; Asia Pacific Oceanic – Philippines, Indonesia+ Colombia (guest), Malaysia; East Asia - Mongolia, Korea, Japan, China; Africa - South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe; Australia and New Zealand; and Tibet Heritage Fund - Germany, Portugal, China, Japan) with the promise to maintain links and continue with the efforts to work with communities. The grand finale was capped by cultural presentations from each country. Trips to the nearby night bazaar became part of the nightly routine of participants during and after the Meeting. (Arlene Lusterio)

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The research team from TAO-Pilipinas and UP College of Architecture

## Research activities started for San Juan City Pride of Place project

LAST APRIL, THE RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS PROGRAM OF TAO-Pilipinas began its research on the “search for the spirit of place” of San Juan City. This research is funded by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and is done in partnership with the Heritage, Theory, and Criticism (HTC) Laboratory of the University of the Philippines College of Architecture (UPCA). The project began with the formation of the research team and an initial ocular inspection of the different barangays of San Juan City.

The research aims to study San Juan City’s cultural landscape, architecture, and people. Specifically, the project intends to 1) get the people’s perception of the place; 2) identify and document relevant landscapes and structures/architecture with cultural significance; and 3) raise awareness of the people by disseminating information and advocating the preservation of these cultural sites. San Juan has a very rich history dating back from the Spanish period. The city is experiencing rapid urbanization but there are parts of San Juan where post-war structures still stand. Through this research project, it is hoped that residents will become more aware of their cultural treasures and the urbanization taking place may be anchored culturally.

In May, the group composed of TAO-Pilipinas and a team from HTC-UPCA formulated the criteria that the researchers would be using as they go about their site visits and field interviews. The criteria

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## TAO Interns from Belgium design building for SHEC Phase 3 housing project

TAO VOLUNTEERS TRACEY LOONTJENS AND BRECHT-Paul Van Acker helped design a 4-storey residential building for a poor community in Malibay, Pasay City. This community is currently situated near the Manila International Airport and is being assisted by SHEC (St. Hannibal Empowerment Center) to be relocated to a 2000-sqm lot also located in Pasay City. This project is the third phase of a 16-phase program by SHEC, which intends to accommodate about 130 families.

Tracey and Paul are both architects from Belgium who came to the Philippines and started their internship at TAO-Pilipinas in November 2009. They wanted to learn more about the characteristics of Philippine cities and villages; examine the cultural, political, economic, and social context of its urban forms; and compare this with other cities or regions. Coming from a European country with a completely different way of living, carrying out the project using the participatory design process has not always been easy. They had to translate all the ideas of the community into a cohesive design, but at the same time consider other aspects such as the climate, natural disasters, limited project cost, and the expected density, among others; to make the residential building more viable, efficient and livable.

After six months of designing and consultation, the process resulted in a design proposal for a medium-rise building with 132 units, each with a small, private terrace, a semi-public garden and a wide, multi-functional outdoor area, a roof garden meant for urban agriculture, a community center, and a commercial road and parking area on the front side of the building. During their last few months at TAO, they made a 3D scaled model of the design which gave a good visualization of the project. They have also started documenting the evolution of design process that they did with the community, which is planned to become a book and will be used to raise funds for the construction of the residential building. Tracey and Paul ended their internship in May 2010 and plan to return to the Philippines very soon. *(Roselyn Veneracion)*



Tracey and Paul presenting their design proposal to SHEC and working on the scaled model of the building

## Research activities... (from page 3)

were based on the characteristics observed during the initial ocular inspection conducted by the group. Barangays Tibagan, Batis, and Balong-bato were chosen as study areas for the research. Initial field interviews of San Juan residents who mainly belong to middle class families revealed an evident sense of pride for their city. The research teams have gone around their assigned areas and interviewed the residents on what they think about San Juan and their barangays. (Surprisingly for the researchers, the residents know quite a lot about their barangay, including how the barangay got its name.)



San Juan residents enjoying the town fiesta on June 24

The researchers are completing their data gathering for Barangays Tibagan and Batis and will be coming up with a draft map based on the data they have collected. The group recently joined the festivities during the city's annual Feast of St. John the Baptist on June 24 to better understand the traditions and customs of San Juan. *(Angel Sales)*

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Top: 3D rendering of building's exterior perspective  
Bottom: completed scaled model of building

## YP Reflections



**Deanna Veronica Haduca** is a senior student of BS Environmental Planning and Management (Major in Urban Planning and Green Architecture) at Miriam College. Veron took up the summer internship at TAO-Pilipinas as part of her on-the-job training requirements. Her main task was to undertake a research study on the development of settlements along the Manggahan Floodway.

My internship at TAO-Pilipinas has changed my perception about the real world and about my course (environmental planning). Through their technical projects with urban poor communities, it made me learn and realize the potentials of being an environmental urban planner and at the same time understand the living conditions of different urban poor communities.

Throughout my internship at TAO-Pilipinas, I experienced having site visits with three different urban poor partner communities. I have been to Bgy. Tanza and Bgy. Tangos in Navotas, and in SHEC-Pasay. I have seen how the houses in Bgy. Tangos, Navotas were built on stilts surrounded by pool of trash underneath. As TAO-Pilipinas extend their technical assistance to these communities, they have launched the Youth Urban Gardens Project, which hopes to provide livelihood to these communities while making it a "green" community. I was impressed with the community-based solid waste management program implemented and maintained in SHEC-Pasay.

Aside from site visits, I was also given a research project about settlements along the Manggahan Floodway Project. I was really overwhelmed upon seeing the research outline that I was to follow which made me initially think of giving up. It was a different research paper for me since it was extensive and I was to do it by myself. Also, I will be doing it for work, not only because it is academically required.

Every task has its challenges and difficulties, and I experienced them as I went through my research --- communicating with government agencies and the urban community leaders especially when it's my first time to visit the government agency or community; meeting new people and personally talking to them. Another challenge I experienced was managing my time and work schedule. I was working under pressure of balancing my field research and site visits with documenting and writing my research paper.

These challenges I faced and eventually overcame, apart from the lessons and realizations I gained and learned after doing my tasks. I learned to work independently and communicate with other people. Learning how to commute is my personal achievement. I also realized and discovered my own potentials as a student taking up an urban planning course. More importantly, I gained an understanding of other peoples' lives and saw reality in a different perspective. I found it was way too different compared to what was taught to us in school.

After my internship experience, I will be looking back on the days I spent doing the tasks assigned to me. I still feel overwhelmed with the thought that I did finish my research paper alone and on time. I feel proud of myself. It would not have been possible without the help and guidance of TAO-Pilipinas whom I thank for trusting me and for giving me this wonderful experience. *(Veron Haduca)*

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**Rowel Lucilo** is a BS Architecture graduate from Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila and participated in the YP Workshop on Water and Sanitation last October 2009. Ali was part of the YP team that assisted a community in Bicol Area, Tanza, Navotas to apply for a legal water connection. For his summer internship, Ali worked on the schematic architectural designs for an Ecology and Demonstration Farm.

My internship in TAO-Pilipinas is one life experience that I will never forget. They taught me a lot of things that cannot be learned in a conventional architectural firm and foremost is to be passionate about helping other people even without getting something in return. As an aspiring architect, the experience taught me to be independent and resourceful. The architects in TAO-Pilipinas helped me in completing my tasks and I often seek their advice on the problems I encounter in the projects. They are all hardworking women, sometimes doing things not necessarily in line with the architecture profession. Multi-tasking is something I also learned in TAO, where you have to be versatile and flexible.

I realized that knowledge is not always in paper and sometimes we have to set aside this paper and explore the world around us. And a lot of the things we experience by exploring our surroundings can be amazing. My stay in TAO helped me to grow more as a person and as an aspiring architect. Given the chance and the means, I would like to help them in their advocacies.

Thank you TAO-Pilipinas for the privilege of helping poor communities in their endeavours for a better life. And for letting me explore design innovation and for letting me express my opinion in every project assigned to me. *(Ali Lucilo)*

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Veron with fellow interns and youth group members in Tanza, Navotas



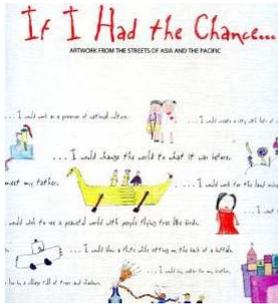
Veron at the SHEC-Pasay socialized housing project



Ali with fellow interns during a visit to the Eco-Farm project site in Norzagaray

## YP Reading List

Every issue, 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](mailto:lib@tao-pilipinas.org) to schedule your visit.



Title: **If I Had the Chance... Artwork from the Streets of Asia and the Pacific**

Author: **Asian Development Bank**

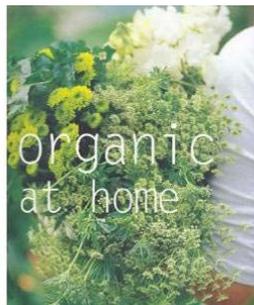
Publisher: **ADB (2003)**

A collection of about 200 artworks by street children (from Dhaka, Jakarta, Kathmandu, Manila, Phnom Penh, Port Moresby, and Ulaanbaatar), this book is based on the Second ADB Street Children's Art Competition held in 2002. The volume depicts the participating children's dreams for a better world and the unique view of poor children who have lived on city streets. Interviews with some of the featured child artists supplement the artworks.

Their artworks are expressive of the hardships they have faced, as can be seen in images of people drowning in floods, houses razed by fire, drug abuse, etc. But at the same time they reveal aspirations for improved life and the readiness to help others if they had the chance to become teachers, nurses, firemen, and social workers. As ADB President Tadao Chino points out in the book's introduction, *"One striking message, common to every country, was the children's own commitment to helping the poor... Nobody, it seems, has greater motivation to help the poor than a poor child."*

Given a voice through art, their works and words actually reveal the many societal problems we have exposed these children to, and the same offers hope and inspiration for us to create better cities where they may achieve their dreams. *(Ge Matabang)*

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Title: **Organic At Home**

Author: **Judyth McLeod**

Publisher: **Murdoch Books (2005)**

In the midst of growing consciousness on sustainable living, this book presents an arsenal of ways to live organically. It highlights the use of natural and toxin-free substances and making everyday choices and actions that tread lightly on our environment. It is organized into three chapters (bodyworks, homeworks, and earthworks) delving into the different levels of changing one's lifestyle into a more "organic" way of life.

The sections on home maintenance and organic gardening are practical and useful. The chapter on organic body care treatments on the other hand, is quite intimidating because it involves sterilized containers and requires preparing ingredients (such as essential oils, vegetable glycerine) which are not readily available in stores. The book's simple instructions do not overcome this inconvenience unless one is ready to transform a part of their house into some sort of a chemist's laboratory. The book does start with a warning that "the first step along the natural path is often the hardest to take" for readers who plan to take organic living seriously.

Overall, the book is well-presented, peppered with nice photos and reads like a coffee table book. A valuable addition to a home library, the book provides very good tips on alternative home-made cleaning options and organic gardening at home. *(Ge Matabang)*

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## Youth Urban Gardens... (from page 2)

ling trays made from recycled plastic bottles, plastic cups or wooden trays lined with used tarpaulins. Some were able to source their own soil from nearby locations. While some communities had small plots of land where they can plant directly on the ground, majority had to rely solely on potted plants for lack of space and land.

The YP summer interns were invited to help with the launch that doubled as their exposure trip to informal settlements. Each participant helped in transferring soil to the seedling containers, planting individual seeds and watering them. This promoted camaraderie among the youths which was forged during their first and subsequent workshops.

In the coming weeks, ocular evaluation will be done on the urban gardens to check its effectiveness and see what can be done to improve the project. *(Carol Gaw)*

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## Asian Coalition for Community Action (ACCA) events



### June 3-6, 2010 – ACCA Navotas City Assessment and Planning

The ACCA Navotas City Network conducted its annual assessment and planning in Banawe, Ifugao participated by the Project Management Committee (PMC) leaders from Tanza and Tangos, namely: Lydia Nilo (Bicol Area), Menelo Abueva and Marginela Brucelo (Masagana Area); and Ruben Peñamante, Cecil Virtuz and Romy Sario (Tangos). Josephine Castillo of DAMPA and TAO representatives Arlene Lusterio & Faith Varona joined the PMC leaders to facilitate the activity. The group

assessed their organizational performance in relation to ACCA targets and also reviewed their organizational structures, vision-mission-goals (VMG) and plan of activities for the coming year. A common VMG was also formulated for the ACCA Navotas Network which will be presented in the upcoming ACCA Navotas Network General Assembly this July. A reflection session focusing on their insights and experiences clarified issues between PMC members and further strengthened their bond and commitment to the ACCA project.



### June 12-13, 2010 – ACCA Navotas Leadership Training Seminar

The long-awaited ACCA Navotas Leadership Training Seminar was finally conducted in Sitio Wawa, Barangay Tangos, Navotas as a capability building activity for the Navotas community leaders. It was attended by approximately 25 participants from Tangos and Tanza. Resource persons included DAMPA president Patricia Herrera and community organizer Josephine Castillo with TAO representatives Faith Varona and Verna Sarraga as facilitators and documenters of the activity.



### June 16, 2010 – ACCA National Meeting

The bi-annual ACCA National Meeting was held last June at the Urban Poor Associate's office in Barangay Central, Quezon City. The event was attended by ACCA network representatives from Navotas, Muntinlupa, Quezon City, Manila, Bicol, Mandaue and 3 cities in Mindanao. Non-government organizations such as the Homeless People's Federation, Foundation for the Development of Urban Poor (FDUP), Urban Poor Associates (UPA), Damayan ng Maralitang Pilipinong Api (DAMPA) and TAO-Pilipinas also attended the meeting. Each city presented an update of its ACCA initiatives including some

lessons learned and difficulties encountered. The group agreed that to get a better insight of each city's ACCA initiatives, future national meetings will focus on in-depth analysis and discussion of the host city's data/information and learning experiences. The next meeting will be hosted by Quezon City. This is also to prepare for the upcoming plan of ACHR to conduct a PO-to-PO ACCA initiatives exchange in three Asian cities where the Philippines will also be represented. (Rosalyn Veneracion)

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## Philippine National Consultation Meeting on Strengthening Climate Resilience

TAO-Pilipinas participated in the first National Consultation on Strengthening Climate Resilience (SCR) in the Philippines, held on May 18-19, 2010 at the SEAMEO Innotech Conference Center in Quezon City. The workshop was attended by more than 40 participants representing the government, non-government organizations (local &

international), scientific institutions as well as civil society organizations that are involved in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) activities in the country. It was jointly organized by Plan International and Christian Aid, which are both members of a consortium led by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) that implements the SCR programme globally.

SCR is a new DfID-funded Multi-Regional programme that aims to enhance ability of governments and civil-society organizations in developing countries to build the resilience of communities to disasters and climate change. Photos and speakers' presentations during said consultation can be downloaded from <http://www.scr-plan.co.cc/scrphotos/scr-national-consultation-philippines/>. (Rosalyn Veneracion)

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## Announcements

### TAO Shelter Magazine No.7 (Double Issue)

TAO Shelter magazine's 7<sup>th</sup> issue will be available by the end of July 2010. This double issue focuses on **Flooding**, with feature articles on:

**Scrapbook:** *Top flooding events in the Philippines and how Brad Pitt is helping build better homes in New Orleans*

**Book Review:** *Books on sustainable waste management and eco-friendly housing*

**Involving Children:** *Young people participate in raising awareness on hazards in their community*

**What Went Wrong:** *Analysis of the floods during Typhoon Ondoy and what we can do about it*

**Participatory 3D Mapping:** *Building a relief model helps a sitio in Pampanga understand flooding in their area*

**The Slow Erosion of Ayigya:** *A community's struggle to deal with the impact of floods in Kumasi, Ghana*

**Rising Tides:** *Research on a community's capacity to deal with coastal flooding in Semarang, Indonesia*

**Preventing Typhoon Damage to Housing:** *A program in Central Vietnam educates people how to typhoon-proof their houses*

**Smart Solutions:** *Infra projects in KL and Singapore reduce flooding and enhance urban quality of life*

**A Holy Design:** *A priest's motivation for living and working with the poor*

**Design Cooperation:** *A Belgian architect works with the future tenants of a future low-cost housing project in Pasay*

**TAO News:** *The 2009 YP Workshop, international shelter course, and urban gardening workshop*

For advance orders or back issues, please call (632) 441-0998 or email your request to [info@tao-pilipinas.org](mailto:info@tao-pilipinas.org). The online version of the magazine may be viewed at [www.taoshelter.tao-pilipinas.org](http://www.taoshelter.tao-pilipinas.org).

