

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Global Campaign for Climate Adaptability Launched

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adaptability, which was initiated by Diaz in 2006, during his year as a Hubert H. Humphrey Fellow in MIT's Special Program for Urban and Regional Studies.

"I feel so blessed to be working with my partners right now, and through this global contest, we hope the best minds in the world will come up with sustainable community projects which we can then replicate, not just in the Philippines, but wherever it is needed," Diaz, lead proponent of the global adaptability challenge, told the *Asian Journal*.

According to the Global Climate Index, the Philippines is one of the ten most afflicted countries in the world in terms of impact in the number of lives and property lost as a result of damage due to climate, and these are mainly in the form of increasing intensities of typhoons visiting the islands annually. This is due mainly to the high vulnerability of rural areas and very little capacity for adaptation (attributed to poverty and lack of awareness on the rising dangers) of the people at risk.

The Designer Villages Challenge will focus on selected climate hotspots in the Philippines, specifically Camarines Sur, a province located in the Bicol region that is frequently devastated by typhoons.

The project aims to bring together local and international architects to find solutions for low-cost residential building designs in the developing

world, especially those that constantly face natural disasters like typhoons and earthquakes.

The winning designs of mater plans for low-income communities of 30 houses will each be awarded monetary prizes. The top three village designs will be built by Gawad Kalinga, the largest and most active non-government slum upgrading and rural community builders in Asia. GK will also be using the new blueprint for villages in critically vulnerable areas.

The Manila Observatory, a private non-stock, non-profit, scientific research institution, recently completed a study on the future challenges of climate in the Naga region, which indicate the growing intensity and shifting typhoon pattern to the south of the archipelago (Visayas and Mindanao) with the path affecting thousands of unprepared communities unused to these types of storms.

The study has inspired the building of a redesigned low-income community which will be the new blueprint of how people in the vulnerable coastal and rural areas and cities can successfully cope with impacts of climate variability.

"Because of this shifting typhoon patterns, the need for homes and buildings that are resilient to strong typhoons, winds and heavy rains becomes a bigger priority," Diaz added.

The Challenge

The global Designer Villages Challenge is a powerful collaboration of service and leadership

between Gawad Kalinga and MyShelter Foundation in a bid to provide innovative housing and community solutions that empower people and are adaptive to the present challenges of climate change.

In January of this year, the Philippines' largest low-cost community builders, Gawad Kalinga, mounted a local design competition, challenging senior architecture and interior design students to raise the bar of excellence for GK communities around the country and the world by harnessing their talents and skills into building the most beautiful, environment-friendly and sustainable GK villages for the poorest of the poor who otherwise cannot afford their services. May 8, 2009 was the last day of submission of entries and awarding will be in September of this year.

Similarly and exactly the year before, MyShelter Foundation together with its partners, Gov. LRay Villafuerte, the National Disaster Coordinating Council, the Private Sector Disaster Management Network and the United Architects of the Philippines mounted an international competition with the vision of culling emergent technologies from the world's architects who can create sustainable new design solutions for schools to improve the overall learning conditions of the children, and to revolutionize the blueprint in making the structure resilient to strong and typhoons.

The winning design is a sustainable bamboo school by Eleena Jamil of Malaysia which began construction at the Nato Elementary School in Camarines Sur last May 15, 2009. This was the

first phase of the project, and organizers now intend to build one of the largest bamboo schools in the world.

This year, these two engines for changing architecture for low-income communities—one for better sustainable design and one for disaster resiliency—have come together through a competition platform to find solutions to the problem of obsolete, low-cost residential building designs in the developing word in the midst of climate change.

Organizers hope that a broader international network base will bring in around 2,000 design entries to complete a full master plan of a climate resilient community for rural areas of the country. The scope of the design will be based on master planning a low-income community of 30 houses based on affordability (\$2,000 USD), typhoon and earthquake resistance, sustainable development, innovative construction technology, scalability and flexibility of use.

This project is in honor of the 90th year anniversary of the Fulbright Program and the 30th year anniversary of the Hubert Humphrey Program. The Fulbright Program promotes leaders who unite the world through a dialogue of peace and understanding through educational exchange.

Allan E. Goodman, President, Institute of International Education (IIE) joined Consul General Cecilia B. Rebong, Tony Meloto of Gawad Kalinga, and Illac Diaz at the press launch of the competition. Fore more details about the competition, visit www.philippineclimatechallenge.org. (Momar G. Visaya)

UST Singers bags top prizes in California choral tilt

by MOMAR G. VISAYA

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Royal and Pontifical University of Santo Tomas. The group was formed in 1992 and in its

17 years of existence, the ensemble has achieved more than 45 top prizes in prestigious

international choral competitions in the United Kingdom, Italy, Bulgaria, France, Czech

Republic, Germany, Netherlands and Switzerland. (Peter C. Carillo)

a third piece of their choosing. The two required pieces for this category were Ave Maria by Morten Lauridsen and Alles was Odem hat Lobe de Herrn by Johann Sebastian Bach. The exceptional interpretation of the UST Singers of these two pieces landed them the first prize with the Cuesta College Chamber Singers and the Fullerton College Concert Choir from the United States placed second and third respectively.

For the Folk Music Competition, the group sang Ayug Ti Amianan, Waray-Waray, and Tirindingding, all arranged by Prof. Fidel G. Calalang, Jr. also bagged the first prize. For this category, the Cuesta College Chamber Singers from the United States and the St. Zlata Meglenska all-female choir from Macedonia garnered the second and third prizes respectively.

During the three-day long choral competitions, the public was given the chance to vote for their favorite choir and the People's Choice Award was accorded to the UST Singers.

The competition was adjudicated by three distinguished judges in the choral world namely, Dr. Ginger Covert Colla, Professor William Hatcher, and Professor Christian Grube.

The UST Singers who are on a concert tour of the United States and the Pacific left Manila last May and will be going back to the Philippines in July after their scheduled performances in San Francisco, San Jose, and Ontario in California.

Under the tutelage of Prof. Fidel G. Calalang, Jr., the choir is composed of students and alumni representing the different colleges and faculties of the

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