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Winning disaster-resistant school building design to rise in Bicol

A school building made from bamboo that can withstand earthquakes and typhoons won the top prize for disaster-resistant building design contest initiated by the Department of Education and its partners in government and the private sector.

The winning entry was submitted by Malaysian architect Eleena Jamil for the “Be Better, Build Better” millennium schools competition which drew some 36 competitors worldwide. Two entries from the Philippines – Bronne Dytoc which used plastic bottles and Nicolo del Castillo which chose concrete -- won second and third prizes, respectively.

According to Education Secretary Jesli Lapus the winning design will be constructed in Sagnay Camarines Sur to be funded by Bayan Foundation and Sagip Kapamilya, both of ABS-CBN.

“The school design competition and the subsequent construction of the winning entry is expected to encourage improvements in the current school building design to make them safer for our teachers and schoolchildren,” Lapus said.

He added that the competition has created a forum for the convergence of societal considerations like design, technology, education and disaster management.

Architect Nathaniel Mendoza of the DepEd, who was one of the contest judges said the competition was one occasion where architects from various countries worked together to address common problems relating to school buildings in the Asia Pacific.

The first prize, second prize and third prize winners received US\$10,000; \$5,000; and \$3,000 respectively.

The criteria for judging were: innovative construction technology, cost effectiveness, typhoon resistance, earthquake resistance, sustainability of site and building, flexibility of use and adaptability to other sites.

Contest organizers are expected to come up with a compilation on the best practices in disaster-resistant school buildings which can be replicated in developing countries.

To date, DepEd has already constructed 15 typhoon-resistant school buildings in Camarines Sur, Legaspi City and Albay. Six more buildings were put up around Bicol with funding from the United Nations Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF). Another six will be constructed in Region 4-B MIMAROPA also through UNICEF.

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The global design competition was a joint undertaking of the Office of Civil Defense DepEd, the National Disaster Coordinating Council, United Architects of the Philippines, My Shelter Foundation, Private Sector Disaster Management Network, ABS-CBN Foundation's Sagip Kapamilya and Bayan; HOLCIM, Petron, the Department of Public Works & Highways, ARCASIA, and DHL.

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