



Curry Stone Design Prize Awarded to Hsieh Ying-Chun for Sustainable Rural Design

by Brit Liggett, 10/06/11



The [Curry Stone Design Prize](#) seeks to illuminate the work of visionary designers who seek to improve the health and safety of communities and the state of the world. This year their Grand Prize was awarded to Hsieh Ying-Chun of Sun Moon Lake, Taiwan. Ying-Chun has dedicated the last decade of his career to helping to rebuild — safely and sustainably — communities that have been decimated by natural disaster. His model also seeks to build affordably, and with the help of the the community and sustainable materials he has assisted in rebuilding towns decimated by the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, the 1999 Nantou earthquake and the 2009 Typhoon Morakot in Taiwan.



Hsieh Ying-Chun uses his talents and knowledge about architecture to help bring communities together to rebuild their own structures. He has worked across Asia teaching villagers how to build new structures that are appropriate to their local surroundings. He empowers local communities to be self-reliant in the building process and allows them to regain their towns without the need for outside assistance. His design firm is located in Sun Moon Lake, Taiwan and employs 20 people. Ying-Chun seeks not just to build structures, but to create groups in these small rural communities that will have the construction skills and leadership to function as a team even after he departs.

His technique is to build cooperation between designers, local contractors, and residents and to employ every villager, young and old, in the rebuilding process. He teaches locals the techniques of building, and has dozens of villagers pitch in to raise frames on houses and community buildings together. He has brought the cost of construction of new buildings down to 50% of normal with his cooperative building techniques, and has helped communities in the wake of earthquakes and tsunamis to grow again.

In the wake of the Sichuan earthquake in China in 2008 he helped to build 500 homes, and installed composting toilets in the villages to help with sanitation issues and to provide fertilizer for local farming. As the Grand Prize Winner, Ying-Chun will receive \$100,000 from the Curry Stone Foundation.

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