

# Group draws attention to 'mosquito hall' issue

**BUT WHAT'S IT FOR?** In a book, a professor and students looked at 119 idle public facilities, seeking to determine what the intended uses and the actual uses have been

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A group of fine arts students and a professor at Taipei National University of the Arts is trying to draw attention to idle public facilities — colloquially known as “mosquito halls” because they often turn into mosquito-breeding sites — that are not only a waste of space and resources, but could also present a health hazard.

In a 700-page book titled *Mirage: A Sample Survey of Taiwan's Idle Public Facilities*, professor Yao Jui-chung (姚瑞中) and the students highlight 119 empty public facilities and, with the support of a selection of

photographs, seek to determine what the sites were originally intended to be used for and what their actual use has been over the years.

## DRAWING ATTENTION

“We will hold a second round of field trips to bring more [government] attention to the problem of mosquito halls,” Yao told reporters after a meeting with Premier Wu Den-yih (吳敦義).

Wu invited Yao and the students to share their findings with Cabinet officials and provide opinions on how to make better use of idle facilities.

All the sites surveyed by the

group were built within the last 20 years and include parking lots, markets, resort sites, art and culture centers, beautification projects, as well as industrial and commercial parks, with total construction costs estimated at NT\$47.4 billion (US\$1.53 billion).

Asked for comment on the issue earlier this week, Wu said that some “mosquito halls” could be dismantled and turned into green spaces if it no suitable use could be found for them.

## EXPENSIVE TASK

Responding to Wu's comments, Yao yesterday said the government should take into account that removing idle public facilities would be costly.

“This was one of the reasons we held the survey. Hard-earned taxpayer money was used to build

those public facilities. People have the right to know how they have been used and to offer their views on the possible ways to transform the mosquito halls,” Yao said.

## PREVENTION TACTICS

Speaking to reporters, Public Construction Commission Minister Fan Liang-shiow (范良鏘) said a comprehensive assessment would be held before new public construction projects are carried out to prevent the creation of more mosquito halls.

Lin Hongjohn (林宏璋), an artist and curator of the 2010 Taipei Biennial, said the underlying problem was a lack of imagination within the government.

“They built so many buildings and then failed to put any cultural elements in them,” Lin said.