



WORKING WITH NATURE: PRACTITIONERS' PERSPECTIVES ON PERMACULTURE DESIGN IN AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPES IN THE PHILIPPINES

Jabez Joshua M. Flores* and Inocencio E. Buot, Jr.

University of the Philippines Los Baños, Los Baños,
Laguna, Philippines 4030

*Corresponding author: jmflores4@up.edu.ph

ABSTRACT – A reductionist view of agriculture as merely food production for profit often leads to the unsustainable management of agricultural landscapes and their surrounding ecosystems. Permaculture offers alternative views of agriculture. This paper looked into how various perspectives of permaculture have influenced different approaches to sustainable agriculture in the Philippines. The experiences of seventeen practitioners from twelve permaculture sites were compared using key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and direct observation using the video blog (vlog) technique. Interview transcripts were analyzed and interpreted while key messages were extracted from the vlogs. Results revealed three prevailing perspectives of permaculture in the Philippines: ecological, socio-cultural, and agricultural. The ecological perspective was shared in 7 permaculture sites, making it the most common among respondents. The view emphasized an individual's participation in the processes of a larger ecosystem and their symbiotic relationship with nature. A socio-cultural perspective highlighted the human dimensions of permaculture, such as food culture, personal relationships, and daily life. Moreover, an agricultural perspective focused on sustainable agribusiness models. The diversity of perspectives has enriched permaculture as a science and practice and is viewed as a regenerative design process benefiting farmers and non-farmers alike. Though approaches may differ, the goal of permaculture to design sustainable and nature-based farming systems remains the same.

Keywords: agroecology, nature-based solutions, sustainable development



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