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## The Masipag Approach: Food Security and Sovereignty, Sustainable Rural Development and Farmers’ Empowerment

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### Abstract

MASIPAG is a national network of farmers’ organisations, agriculturalists, scientists, academics and NGOs promoting farmer-led sustainable rural development through the promotion and practice of the MASIPAG agro-ecosystems conversion program. The MASIPAG development approach aims to create change not only in farming techniques but through a holistic transformation of people and society. One MASIPAG farmer describes this approach: Even if one is practicing a full organic system with MASIPAG seeds, if he has no concern for other farmers and society, then he cannot be considered a true MASIPAG farmer.

The poster will focus on the main aspects of the MASIPAG approach which is: Bottom-approach; Farmer-scientist-NGO partnership; Farmer-led research; Farmer to farmer mode of technology and knowledge transfer; Advancing farmer’s rights and genuine agrarian reform. The MASIPAG agro-ecosystems conversion programme includes: Diversified and integrated farming systems; Bio-fertiliser development and use; Alternative pest management and upland development program.

At the same time, a critical element in building sustainable and resilient communities is being able to empower farmers’ organisations so that they are capable of addressing conditions that intensify the ‘greenhouse effect’, depletion of fossil fuels, and other conditions that adversely impact the ecosystem and biodiversity in rural communities.

In different partnerships at different levels (community, provincial and regional level) experiences are shared to strengthen the sustainability and resiliency of local communities. For instance faculty members and students of the Community Development do fieldwork in MASIPAG member farmers’ organisations to help strengthening popular/community education on sustainable agriculture and resiliency to climate change. They are working together to assist local farmers’ organisations in effectively practicing the agro-ecosystems conversion program, promoting adaptability and resiliency to climate change and effective advocacy work in order to address issues arising from destructive and large scale mining, illegal logging, land use conversion/crop conversion and other issues that negatively impact ecosystems and biodiversity. To ensure the sustainability of the farmers’ organisations and their efforts to promote sustainable agriculture, programs for organisational development, leadership development are also being institutionalised at various levels of the MASIPAG national network.

**Keywords:** Empowerment of farmer organisations, farmer-led rural development, food security, sustainable agriculture