

A shift in values is needed to address climate change impacts affecting communities and the environment in the Philippines

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ABSTRACT. This feature essay explores the intricate symbiotic link that exists between human values and the planet's resources. It emphasizes the crucial relationship between human survival, economic growth, and environmental preservation. The Philippines, a country blessed with immense biodiversity, is highly reliant on natural resources for subsistence, livelihood, and well-being. The Philippines is at serious ecological risk due to unsustainable practices, particularly in the field of marine ecology. The growing threat of climate change only serves to intensify this approaching ecological disaster. The weight of addressing these challenges ultimately falls upon the shoulders of the youth, who will bear the consequences of the acts of the current generation. The paper highlights the importance of human activity in causing climate change impacts and emphasizes the urgent necessity for societal values to change in order to prevent looming environmental crises. It issues a compelling call to action, urging individuals and society as a whole to recognize their shared responsibility in minimizing the adverse impacts of climate change. Educational institutions stand out as significant catalysts for change, boosting environmental awareness and developing sustainable behaviors. The essay highlights the moral and just aspects of climate responsibility and the need for governments to take preventive action. The essay concludes that there is a need for collaborative, united efforts in the Philippines to safeguard and conserve the environment as a crucial prerequisite for a sustainable future to mitigate climate change impacts.



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Humanity completely relies on the abundance of natural resources on our planet, implying that humans cannot exist without nature. Filipinos are fortunate to have a wealth of natural resources, as reflected by the diverse flora and fauna found throughout the islands. The natural environment proves to be crucial not only for people's well-being but also for long-term growth, and we have become increasingly reliant on it for food, shelter, livelihood, and other essentials over the years. However, because of unsustainable consumption of resources, the environment as a whole has deteriorated, especially the marine environment (Perez and Bua, 2019; Abreo et al., 2018; Macusi et al., 2011). Consequently, today's youth will face the future repercussions of climate change, playing a crucial role in resolving environmental issues. We must take action to safeguard our planet against climate change.

Human activities are continuously contributing to the worsening of climate change, Huber and Knutti (2011) observed that roughly 74% of global warming is due to human activities, and research under the IPCC (Fifth Assessment Report) determined that human activities heavily contributed to the warming of the planet with a 95% probability. Clearly, human activities are the primary contributors to the rise of an unbalanced amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, resulting in the anthropogenic component of climate change (Driga and Drigas, 2019). Climate change is and will be a tremendous burden caused by humans on earth. The decreasing quality of the air, marine pollution, and high temperatures, which encourage disease transmission and result in temperature-related fatalities, are only a few of the factors that play a part (Crimmins et al., 2016; Macusi et al., 2021). According to Driga and Drigas (2019), the following human daily life activities are linked to the impacts of climate change: transportation, food industry, paper production and deforestation, water overuse, fossil fuels, and electricity overuse. In increasing land use change, fertilizer

use on lawns and farms, including inorganic pesticide use and waste decomposition, If these human activities remain unchanged, it will not help mitigate climate change impacts in the near future. Hence, a fundamental shift in values is required on the part of both individuals and society as a whole.

Even though humanity has a greater number of technological breakthroughs and sustainability measures in place more than before, the deterioration of the natural environment as a result of human activities also continues. Recognizing this fact, there is a need for the educational system of the Philippines to play a critical role in raising future adults who are dedicated to mitigating the impacts of climate change. This can be done by increasing students' awareness and understanding, which would be essential to encouraging change in their behaviors and attitudes toward environmental concerns and environmental education aimed at informing local communities to become environmentally friendly (Perez and Bua, 2019). But a fundamental shift to mitigate the impacts of climate change remains needed. The shift to sustainability will not be easy if most individuals do not believe that they have a personal responsibility for climate change impact mitigation. According to a survey conducted by Leiserowitz et al. (2010), 45% of respondents believed that human activity could decrease the impact of climate change, but they were not convinced that people were willing to do what was needed. People who believed in personal responsibility regarding climate change were more inclined to engage in future water-saving behaviors, such as recycling water, than those who did not (Hayles and Dean, 2015). A significant increase in energy efficiency and environmental responsibility can be reached with increased efforts in education, awareness, and willingness on the part of the people.

As inhabitants of this planet, we bear the responsibility of addressing and taking action against climate change.

But not everyone is willing to change the convenience of life into a sustainable one, most people are relying on the government and other agencies to take action to mitigate the impacts of climate change. This is where climate change becomes a moral problem and a justice concern, not only an economic but also a scientific one. For example, the majority of respondents in a 2005 study said that combating climate change would be difficult, and when asked who should bear the most responsibility, 32% mentioned national governments and 30% stated the global community.

Continuing a UK poll from 2010, 63% of respondents recognized their role in the battle against climate change, while 68% of respondents agreed to the UK government spending tax money on British projects to address climate change, and most respondents felt it could be done by changing their habits (Hayles and Dean, 2015). A survey by the European Commission additionally demonstrated that 76% of respondents believe that governments and industry are not doing enough to combat climate change, 67% believe that as citizens themselves, they are not doing enough and therefore feel a moral obligation to take action, while 64% of people think their governments aren't doing enough, and 58% think Europe isn't doing enough (Eurobarometer, 2009).

Therefore, our efforts to live sustainably will not be sufficient to significantly slow down climate change impacts if we do not feel responsible for doing so and if we continue to rely on other groups to make the change. If this is how we act to mitigate climate change, we cannot possibly achieve any real progress.

In addition to our individual roles, a government's role is to protect its citizens and maintain social order, particularly in matters that affect both its citizens and the areas under its jurisdiction. Because of the government's lackadaisical response to mitigating climate change, efforts by its citizens to mitigate it will likely fail. In

the previously mentioned European Commission study, it was shown that most respondents were placing significant responsibility on governments. Respondents criticized governmental responses to climate change negatively and reported stronger feelings of betrayal than of reassurance, suggesting that a perceived failure by governments to address the climate crisis is related to increased distress among the general population. Perceiving ineffective government action and subsequent sentiments of betrayal were related to climate anxiety and distress (Hickman et al., 2021).

While we have a government that can do a lot of establishing laws that will inevitably help protect, conserve, and mitigate climate change impacts, we also have individual choices to make progress toward climate change impact mitigation. This can only be addressed successfully when we are united as one people in the Philippines.

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