

# Aborlan, Academe, and Advocacy: Lessons from Palawan, Philippines

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# Climate Communication and Adaptation Research in the Philippines

- ▶ Comparative work with the island nation of Indonesia
- ▶ Research work had three underlying topics:
  1. Climate change:
    - ▶ What is climate change?
  2. Climate change communication:
    - ▶ How is climate change disseminated and communicated among diverse actors in the community?
  3. Participation in environmental decision-making:
    - ▶ How do actors participate in decision-making related to natural resources management, development, and policy?

# Palawan, Philippines

- ▶ “Last ecological
- ▶ Agrarian lands,
- ▶ Farming, fishing,

rock formations



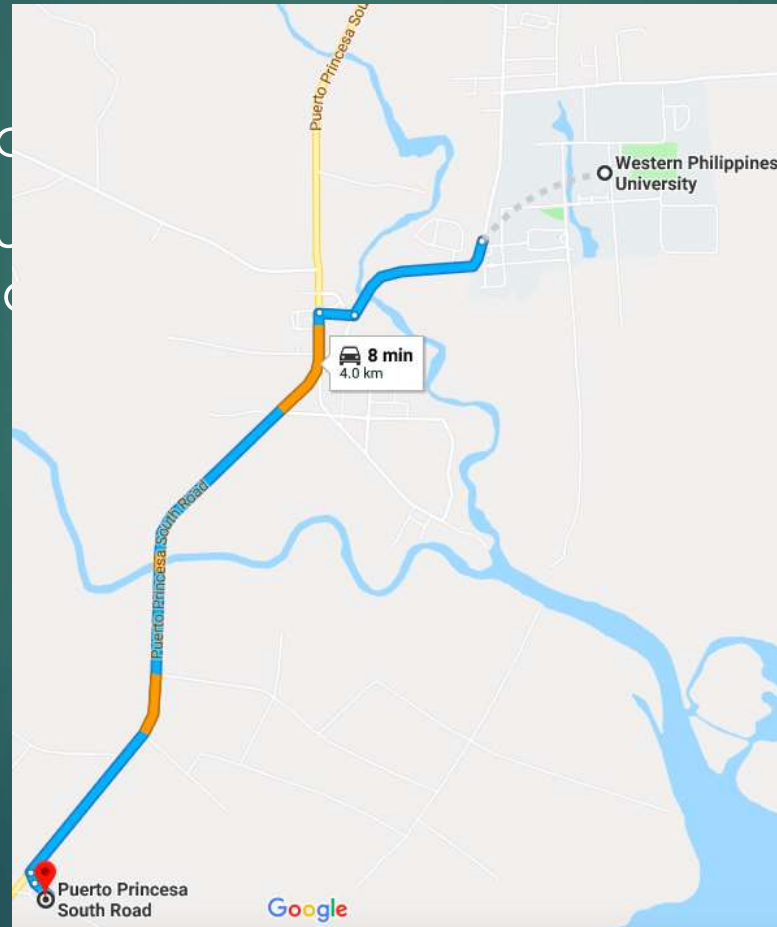
# Aborlan

- ▶ Situated approximately 90 km south of Puerto Princesa
- ▶ Population of approximately 35,000 people in 2015
- ▶ Sparse communities throughout the municipality
- ▶ Poor community reliant mainly on farming and fishing
- ▶ Why Aborlan?
  - ▶ Conservation work in regards to mangrove forests, the expansion of marine protected areas, and ecotourism

# Academe: Western Philippines University (WPU)

- ▶ Founded in 1910
- ▶ Began as an agricultural school
- ▶ Expanded to include education, engineering, marine sciences, and

ation, engineering,





# Climate Change to Coal

- ▶ Climate change caused by anthropogenic acts:
  - ▶ Garbage
  - ▶ Plastics
  - ▶ Smoke
- ▶ Coal-powered plant
  - ▶ Narra: located directly in front of the Rasa Wildlife Sanctuary that contains the country's last remaining coastal forests
  - ▶ Aborlan: situated across a fish sanctuary where locals rely primarily on the fishing grounds for their livelihoods



Palawan No to Coal Fired Power Plant. HELP PLEASE.

379 views

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**WPUNo2Coal**  
Published on Oct 9, 2013

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D.M.Consunji, Inc. (DMCI) is a giant corporation wanting to burn his coal mined that he cannot sell in a coal fired power plant right beside the Western Philippines University in the province of Palawan Philippines where the whole local government of the province is trying

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<https://twitter.com/FreeSpirits/lists>

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Save Palawan the last frontier, OPPOSE the building of Coal Plant.

Community

# Advocacy from the Academy

- ▶ Information, Education, Communication (IEC) campaigns
  - ▶ Focused mainly on health-related risks stemming from coal-powered plants
  - ▶ Flyer distribution in town
- ▶ Workshops and seminars
  - ▶ Emphasis on fishing grounds, farm lands, and livelihoods
  - ▶ Personal narratives about health challenges (e.g. asthma and issues of clean drinking water)
- ▶ Social media



# Challenges on the Ground

- ▶ Participation
  - ▶ Distance to workshops and seminars
  - ▶ Scientific jargon
  - ▶ Seminars and workshop times
  - ▶ Funding
  - ▶ Invited spaces
- ▶ Communication
  - ▶ Dependent mainly on community 'gossip'
  - ▶ Environmental activism in social media is still an underdeveloped phenomenon among the poor

# Challenges on the Ground

- ▶ Academics as activists
  - ▶ Research work and meetings
  - ▶ Environmental activism dependent on conservation or livelihood threats
  - ▶ Environmental education applied concurrently with environmental activism rather than an ongoing process
- ▶ Community activism
  - ▶ Threats from corporate representatives
  - ▶ Corruption
  - ▶ Sentiments of

# Implications

- ▶ Hierarchy of power and politics among the poor
  - ▶ Deliberative democracy
  - ▶ Participatory activism
- ▶ Gradual growth of information and communication technology
  - ▶ Social media
  - ▶ Ecological citizenship



# THANK YOU!

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