Lesson 6
Turning Toward Sustainability
Sustainable

- Ecologically sound
- Economically viable
- Socially just

Photo credit: Adi simionov, Batad rice terraces. Wikimedia Commons. Creative Commons CC BY SA 3.0.
Efficiency

Agroecology recycles and reuses resources whenever possible, just as natural systems continually recycle rainfall and organic matter.

Composting (pictured) recycles organic matter, converting waste into fertilizer to help crops grow.

Photo credit: Scot Nelson. Composting at a Kona coffee farm: turning the pile. Flickr. Creative Commons CC BY SA 2.0.
Self-sufficiency

Agroecology requires minimal inputs beyond what Nature already provides (sunlight, soil, water, and biodiversity).

Dryland farming (pictured) relies exclusively on rainwater and soil moisture.

Photo credit: Chris Devaraj. Palouse hills, Washington. Wikimedia Commons. Creative Commons CC BY 2.0.
Diversity

Agroecology makes use of many different species of plants and animals on the same farm, and benefits from their interactions.

Growing a variety of different crops (pictured) and rotating them over time helps control pests.

Photo credit: Anna Frodesiak. A small vegetable farm in rural Hainan Province, China. Public domain.
Agroecology can better withstand and recover from shocks like floods, hurricanes, and droughts.

Contour farming (pictured) can help reduce soil erosion during heavy storms.

Photo credit: Tim McCabe. Contour farming. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.
Duck-Rice-Fish Case Study

Photo credit: Greenpeace East Asia, 2011.