120 Monitoring and Evaluation 8



A Breath of Fresh Air

Marcos Marama, Jr.,

Barangay San Miguel Administrator

Direct Beneficiary

DILG – Leadership Development

Program

Increasing population, rapid urbanisation, and industrialisation have all contributed to environmental degradation not only in Barangay San Miguel but also throughout the country. After all, the ecology of a village is the ecology of the country. As such, the fragile balance in the ecosystem must be maintained.

As the Barangay Administrator of Barangay San Miguel, it is my job to ensure that the people living in my village are going to be okay. I take stock of the volume of vehicles using our roads,

the cleanliness of the environment, and the quality of our basic services. In short, it is up to me to balance the progress that booming industries bring to our barangay with the good quality of life that I want our residents to enjoy.

A certain polluted creek, however, would test my resolve. Sapang Liwanag was known as the most foul-smelling creek in the village. Its odour would creep into nearby houses, office buildings, and shanties, so I asked our residents to unite and help in eradicating the stench of Sapang Liwanag. I also coordinated with government officials, volunteers, and the private sector so we can clean the creek together.

At first, we did not even have equipment. We had neither boots nor cleaning supplies—we did not have anything to clean the creek with. We did not even know where to begin or how to solve the problem. Our budget was extremely low and we could barely afford to pay volunteer workers the minimum wage.

Together with Mercy Tuico from DILG and Barangay Chair Orlando Benito, I started conceptualising and developing plans and programs aimed at rehabilitating Sapang Liwanag. After planning, we approached companies and asked them to help out in cleaning up the creek. We were able to secure donations for cleaning materials. Volunteers from the barangay also showed up to clean. Up to now, the creek gets cleaned every week.

We have also received an award from the city in recognition of our efforts, but for the most part, I am proudest of the fact that the people in our barangay can now breathe in fresh air.