



## Solving the Problem One Household at a Time

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As President of a homeowners' association in Barangay San Miguel, I have clear memories of how Sapang Liwanag has been a silent testament to how economic progress has changed life in our barangay .

In 1987, you could still catch fish which you could take home to eat. But over time, as industries settled near the creek, the landscape changed. Companies such as Coca-Cola started putting up factories along the creek. Then bakeries followed suit. We found worms in the drainage because of the waste from the bakeries.

Over the next decades, the amount of refuse had quadrupled, thereby clogging the sewage system. With this came flooding, and it would take days or months for the water to recede every time this happened. Elevated roads were then built, but the areas around the roads turned in to a catch basin which left nearby homes submerged in murky floodwater.

Those who had gone through the flood started getting athlete's foot, so we also tried using boats.

The government came in to initiate projects such as dredging and fencing, but these were never finished. So the people took the matter into their own hands. We decided to practice waste segregation one household at a time. Slowly but steadily, the flooding stopped.

I remember the Filipino saying that goes, "Ang basurang itinapon mo ay babalik sa iyo (The trash you throw away will find its way back to you)." I now know that waste should be managed, and that everyone should practice discipline when disposing of one's trash. It cannot be just one or two of us; it has to be the whole community."

Now that the residents of Barangay San Miguel and I no longer have to live with floods, we can look toward the future with renewed hope.