



Taking action while there is still time

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As the supervisor of volunteer cleaners in Barangay San Miguel, I have seen the worst of the refuse that end up in Sapang Liwanag. There are plastic bags and whatnot, and we sometimes have to deal with dengue-causing mosquitoes infesting the creek, too. On occasion, I have seen the carcasses of dogs and cats. The foul odour becomes unbearable at times, too.

Before, all we had were dust pans and brooms to clean the sewers. We did not even have gloves. We just wore our uniforms—a simple T-shirt—to clean the creek. We would put all our trash in plastic bags and give these to the garbage collectors.

I knew that things needed to change, especially because climate change can make things worse. We needed to take care of our surroundings and keep it tidy. We had to stop using plastic so it would not clog up our sewers and canals. Now, because the use of plastic and Styrofoam in the village has decreased, the canals and sewers are no longer as clogged. People have also learned to stop throwing garbage into the creek.

It is important, however, that my fellow volunteers and I do not stop cleaning. I would like us to set an example and we want them to see that we do not leave a location until it is clean.

Of course, it would be better if other barangays can follow our lead and teach their kids about proper garbage disposal. I believe all of us stand to benefit from this, for communities will not prosper if they do not help each other. I hope we all unite and help each other clean all the clogged creeks and sewers while there is still time, while we can still turn things around.

I am confident that my unwavering service to Barangay San Miguel for the last 10 years has made a difference, and I am happy to have met people who share my passion.