



## Nationwide Drive Improves Waste Management



Photo: Jun Elias

Mayor of San Fernando, Philippines leads fight against garbage.

“The study tour opened my eyes to the potential of good environmental management. San Fernando’s environmental programs contribute to sustainable development - visitors come to see them and spend money, and citizens see the benefits and are proud.”

- Mary Jane Ortega, Mayor of San Fernando, Philippines

Since 1998, USAID’s United States-Asia Environmental Partnership (US-AEP) program has assisted the small northern Philippine city of San Fernando on environmental practices. US-AEP’s on-going support of Mayor Mary Jane Ortega’s solid waste initiatives has allowed the city of San Fernando to become a model for other local governments throughout the country – 19,000 people have visited the city to learn about its environmental programs.

Mayor Ortega went on a study tour to the United States to learn about local government’s role in solid waste management. She returned home and created the Solid Waste Management Association of the Philippines (SWAPP), the first of its kind in Asia. As President of SWAPP, she assisted 100 local government in developing waste management plans to comply with the country’s Ecological Solid Waste Management Act. In 2001, Ortega secured a \$1.3 million World Bank loan to convert San Fernando’s dumpsite into an engineered sanitary landfill modeled after those she saw on her USAID study tour in the United States.

When completed, the facility will become the fourth sanitary landfill in the Philippines. The landfill currently employs forty-six workers at \$3.60 per day through an innovative recycling program that has reduced the amount of waste processed daily by 15%. These results have fueled the development of a thriving recycling industry which has grown to fourteen dealers. One community, Barangay Lingsat, installed its own recycling facility to reduce community waste and now earns \$360 per month by selling recyclables.

First Person

