

School-Community Practices in the Implementation of Brigada Eskwela in Public Elementary Schools

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Abstract

This study examined school–community practices in the implementation of Brigada Eskwela in selected public elementary schools in one division in Albay. It explored how organizing, leading, resource mobilization, and collaboration contribute effective school readiness, guided by principles of volunteerism and community participation. A descriptive research design was used, and validated questionnaires were administered to 110 respondents comprising school heads and teachers. Data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, weighted means, chi-square tests, and ANOVA.

Finding showed that organizing and leading practices were implemented to a very high extent, supported by systematic planning, needs assessment, communication, and leadership. Resource mobilization was much practiced, while community and school collaboration were only moderately practiced, as stakeholder engagement was concentrated mainly during the Brigada Eskwela period. Readiness levels followed the same trend, with high readiness in organizing and leading but weaker readiness in collaborative dimensions. ANOVA revealed significant differences across dimensions, indicating uneven program implementation.

The study highlights the need for year-round stakeholder engagement, stronger volunteer coordination, and enhanced communication systems. It aligns with SDG 4, SDG 11, and SDG 17 by emphasizing shared responsibility for safe, inclusive, and prepared learning environments. Overall, the finding demonstrate how structured school-community partnerships contribute to the sustainability of educational institutions.

Keywords: Brigada Eskwela; Community Collaboration; Functional Theory of Volunteerism; Public Elementary Schools; Resource Mobilization; School–Community Partnership; Sustainable Development Goals; Volunteerism

1. Introduction

Brigada Eskwela has evolved from a school clean-up initiative into a national program that strengthens partnerships, resource sharing, and coordinated school readiness efforts in public schools. Anchored in the Filipino spirit of bayanihan and supported by institutional policies, the program mobilizes teachers, parents, alumni, local government units, and volunteers to prepare schools before the opening of classes. Despite its strong policy foundation, variations in resources, leadership practices, and stakeholder engagement contribute to differences in the quality and sustainability of implementation. These conditions underscore the need to examine school–community practices particularly organizing, leading, resource mobilization, and collaboration to understand how they influence Brigada Eskwela’s overall effectiveness.

1.1 Background of Brigada Eskwela and School–Community Practices

Brigada Eskwela, or the National Schools Maintenance Week, has become a long-running educational tradition grounded in the Filipino value of cooperation. Volunteers prepare school facilities through repairs, repainting, and other tasks that contribute to safe learning environments. DepEd policies such as DepEd Order No. 10, s. 2015 and DepEd Order No. 22, s. 2017 emphasize the essential role of stakeholders in ensuring school readiness. However, challenges such as limited resources, inconsistent participation, and difficulties sustaining community involvement persist. These differences highlight the need to understand how school heads, teachers, parents, and community members collaborate to organize, lead, and sustain Brigada Eskwela activities, especially in diverse public elementary school contexts.

1.2 Themes and Insights from Literature on Brigada Eskwela Implementation

Literature demonstrates that Brigada Eskwela is strongly supported by legal and administrative frameworks encouraging community participation and shared responsibility (R.A. No. 8525, 1998; DepEd Brigada Eskwela Manual, 2009). Studies highlight leadership as a critical factor, noting that democratic, transformational, and delegative leadership practices

improve program efficiency and encourage broader stakeholder participation (Quirap, 2023; Catid, 2021). Research also identifies gaps in compliance, documentation, and technical skills among coordinators, suggesting a need for systematic mentoring and capacity-building (Requina, 2022). Supervision and teacher involvement likewise influence program effectiveness, as equitable task distribution, constructive feedback, and recognition systems improve engagement (Sumapal & Haramain, 2023; Carrillo & Janer, 2022). Parental and community involvement strengthens collaboration, trust, and continuity of support (Ibañez, 2023; Basibas, 2021; Lemmer, 2023). Other studies emphasize the importance of digital collaboration, differentiated strategies for different school sizes, disaster preparedness, learning continuity, and volunteer motivation (Puno & Romero, 2020; Nieva & Lim, 2023; Tentativa et al., 2021; Peregrino et al., 2022; Reyes, 2024). Together, these insights underscore that effective implementation of Brigada Eskwela relies on strong leadership, community partnerships, structured planning, and sustained resource mobilization.

1.3 Local, National, and Global Context of School–Community Engagement in Education

The study was conducted in selected public elementary schools in Albay, a province characterized by coastal, agricultural, and upland communities. Geographic and socioeconomic differences significantly shape Brigada Eskwela implementation, as accessibility, community capacity, and available resources affect stakeholder participation. Nationally, Brigada Eskwela serves as a flagship program that promotes shared responsibility in education, while globally, literature on participatory governance and community engagement affirms that strong partnerships between schools and communities contribute to sustainable educational improvement.

1.4 Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations of School–Community Practices in Brigada Eskwela

The study is anchored on the Functional Theory of Volunteerism (Clary & Snyder, 1999), which explains stakeholder participation based on motivations such as values, understanding, career development, social connection, protection, and personal enhancement. This framework helps interpret why teachers, parents, and community members contribute to Brigada Eskwela efforts. Complementing this is the Community Participation Theory (Lachapelle & Austin, 2014), which highlights the significance of inclusive, meaningful stakeholder involvement in achieving sustainable outcomes. Applied to Brigada Eskwela, the theory underscores that shared decision-making and collaborative planning improve school readiness and strengthen long-term partnerships. These theories collectively frame how school-community practices drive the success of Brigada Eskwela implementation.

1.5 Research Gaps and Rationale for Studying Brigada Eskwela Implementation

Current literature predominantly examines leadership practices, general program implementation, or isolated aspects of stakeholder participation (Alave & Ancho, 2020; Catid, 2021; Quirap, 2023; Reyes, 2024; Santos, 2024). However, research remains limited on how school heads, teachers, parents, and local stakeholders collectively influence Brigada Eskwela's sustainability and overall impact on school readiness. Few studies explore how these actors jointly engage in organizing, leading, mobilizing resources, and collaborating to support the program. This study addresses this gap by analyzing school-community practices as an integrated system affecting Brigada Eskwela implementation in public elementary schools.

1.6 Alignment of Brigada Eskwela with Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Brigada Eskwela aligns with several Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), as it enhances school readiness and supports equitable access to safe and conducive learning environments. The program also contributes to SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) by fostering local resilience, shared responsibility, and community participation in maintaining public school facilities. Its collaborative nature reflects SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) through the active involvement of parents, teachers, LGUs, NGOs, and volunteers who work together toward improving educational outcomes. Additionally, Brigada Eskwela supports SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) by promoting clean, safe, and disaster-prepared learning spaces that safeguard students' physical well-being. Collectively, these alignments demonstrate how Brigada Eskwela advances educational, community, institutional, and public health sustainability.

1.7 Importance of Strengthening Brigada Eskwela for Multidisciplinary Sustainability

Strengthening Brigada Eskwela contributes to educational sustainability by improving school readiness and learning conditions. It supports socioeconomic sustainability through volunteerism, resource mobilization, and inclusive participation. The program advances community sustainability by fostering shared responsibility, social cohesion, and long-term collaboration among stakeholders. It also enhances institutional sustainability by highlighting the need for structured planning, capacity-building, documentation, and continuous evaluation to sustain its impact. Through these interdisciplinary contributions, Brigada Eskwela becomes a model of collaborative governance and community empowerment in education.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

A descriptive research design was employed to document how Brigada Eskwela is implemented in public elementary schools and to determine the extent of school–community practices that support the program. Descriptive research is used to explain characteristics, behaviors, and events as they naturally occur (McCombes, 2023). A structured survey questionnaire was administered through printed, mailed, and face-to-face formats, and responses were summarized using frequency counts and percentages.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in selected public elementary schools within one school division in the Province of Albay. Respondents were drawn from schools in different areas of the division to capture diverse practices in the implementation of Brigada Eskwela. The location included a mix of school communities with varying levels of accessibility and stakeholder resources, allowing the research to represent differing conditions influencing school–community participation in Brigada Eskwela.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of 55 public elementary school heads and 55 selected teachers who were directly involved in planning and carrying out Brigada Eskwela activities. Purposive sampling was used to select teachers with active participation in the program, consistent with the explanation that purposive sampling identifies individuals most likely to provide relevant information based on their characteristics or experiences (Etikan et al., 2016). Total enumeration was applied to include all school heads in the division, as their manageable number made it feasible to gather perspectives from the entire group. This combination ensured that the respondents represented those most knowledgeable about school–community practices in Brigada Eskwela.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study used purposive sampling for teachers and total enumeration for school heads. Teachers were selected based on their involvement in Brigada Eskwela, ensuring that only those with direct participation provided data. All school heads in the division were included to obtain comprehensive insights into leadership roles and implementation practices. This sampling strategy allowed the study to capture reliable and meaningful responses from individuals who had firsthand experience with Brigada Eskwela activities.

2.5 Research Instrument

Two validated researcher-developed questionnaires were used. The first assessed school–community practices in organizing, leading, resource mobilization, and collaboration using a five-point Likert scale. The second measured the readiness of teachers and school heads using the same scale. Items were developed based on DepEd guidelines, including the Brigada Eskwela Manual (2009) and DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2023. Content validation was conducted by five experts, followed by pilot testing in schools outside the sample. Revisions were made to improve clarity, alignment, and completeness.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Approval to conduct the study was obtained from the Schools Division Superintendent and school heads. Validated questionnaires were personally distributed to ensure full retrieval. Completed instruments were collected, coded, and prepared for quantitative analysis. Data collection procedures ensured consistency and accuracy in capturing the respondents' experiences and practices.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, weighted mean, and chi-square tests. Frequency counts followed the method described by Kenney and Keeping (1951). Percentages were computed by dividing frequencies by total responses. Weighted mean was used to interpret Likert-scale responses following Broto (2007). ANOVA procedures were applied to determine significant differences among school groups.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study followed ethical guidelines to protect the rights and privacy of respondents. Permission was secured from the Schools Division Superintendent and participating school heads before data collection. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and voluntary nature, and informed consent was obtained. Confidentiality was maintained by excluding personal identifiers and storing data securely with access limited to the researcher. Respondents were allowed to withdraw at any time, ensuring respect for autonomy and welfare throughout the research process.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Extent of School–Community Practices in Brigada Eskwela

3.1.1 Organizing Practices

Schools demonstrated a very high extent of organizing practices, with an overall mean of 4.69. The strongest indicators were scheduling activities and assessing school needs, both showing highly consistent implementation. Regular communication with stakeholders and organizing volunteers were also evident but slightly lower than other indicators, suggesting minor gaps in volunteer coordination and material preparation. These results indicate that schools exercise systematic planning and coordination aligned with Garcia and Luna (2021), who emphasize early scheduling and needs assessment as essential for successful program implementation. Strong communication practices support Santos' (2022) assertion that transparency fosters cooperation and readiness. The slightly lower ratings on volunteer organization reflect areas where strategic refinement could further strengthen operational efficiency.

3.1.2 Leading Practices

Leading practices were also rated at a very high extent, with an overall mean of 4.69. Respondents rated scheduling and needs assessment as the strongest leadership behaviors. Communication with stakeholders and delegation of volunteer roles were also strong, though ensuring the availability of materials received slightly lower ratings. These results align with Ramos (2025), who notes that strategic planning and priority-setting characterize effective school leadership. Regular communication supports Jimenez's (2025) emphasis on participatory decision-making as a source of trust and motivation. Delegation practices further reflect Cruz's (2024) argument that clear volunteer guidance enhances program outcomes. The lower rating on material availability suggests leadership challenges related to logistical support.

3.1.3 Resource Mobilization Practices

Resource mobilization was rated at much practiced, with a mean of 4.38. Establishing partnerships showed the highest extent, followed by monitoring resource use and communicating resource needs. Providing training for volunteers and developing mobilization plans showed the lowest ratings, indicating areas needing support. The strong scores in partnerships and communication align with Thompson's (2023) findings that sustainable programs rely on robust networks and clear information sharing. Martinez (2022) stresses systematic planning and evaluation, which helps explain the moderate results in training and formal planning, indicating schools' need to improve long-term strategies and capacity-building mechanisms.

3.1.4 Community Collaboration Practices

Community collaboration was moderately practiced, with a mean of 3.38. The community understood their roles and contributed effectively during Brigada Eskwela, but involvement was largely seasonal rather than continuous. Initiating collaboration and communicating objectives received the lowest ratings, indicating weak early-stage engagement. These findings reflect Epstein and Sanders' (2021) framework, which stresses that clear expectations foster responsive participation but do not automatically lead to shared ownership. Lower indicators in meetings and communication align with Bryk and Schneider's (2020) concept of relational trust, showing that limited interaction reduces opportunities for deeper, long-term partnerships.

3.1.5 School Collaboration Practices

School collaboration was also moderately practiced, with a mean of 3.38. Schools successfully involved teachers and internal personnel, but consistent collaboration with community partners throughout the year was lacking. Meetings, task distribution based on skill, and early planning were particularly weak areas. The results support Warren et al. (2020), who argue that clear goals and communication enhance collaboration. Meanwhile, Putnam's (2020) Social Capital Theory explains that limited early coordination reduces opportunities for building strong relational ties. These findings indicate that collaboration remains primarily event-driven, requiring more sustained, year-round engagement.

3.2 Significant Differences in School–Community Practices

Organizing and leading practices showed the highest implementation, both with means of 4.69, while community involvement and school collaboration had the lowest means at 3.32. ANOVA confirmed significant differences across the five dimensions, with an F-value of 7.74 exceeding the critical value of 5.14, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The significant difference indicates uneven implementation across dimensions. These findings support De Jesus (2024), who asserts that strong leadership and organization enhance participation, while weaker collaboration reduces overall effectiveness. Mandolado and Ancho (2023) similarly found that schools excel in operational aspects but struggle with sustaining community participation.

3.3 Level of Implementation of School–Community Practices

3.3.1 Organizing Readiness

Readiness in organizing was very high, with a mean of 4.57. Schools demonstrated strong planning, need assessment, communication, and role assignment. Resource preparation, while strong, was the lowest among the indicators. These results support Alvarez (2020), who highlights early planning and structured systems as markers of organizational readiness. Slight weaknesses in resource preparation suggest the need for continuous support and efficient procurement processes.

3.3.2 Leading Readiness

Leading readiness was also very high, with a mean of 4.57. Strategic planning, decision-making, and communication were consistently practiced. Material preparation again showed a slightly lower rating. These findings align with Fullan (2021), who emphasizes context-based leadership in guiding meaningful school initiatives. Strong delegation practices reflect Hallinger's (2020) concept of collaborative instructional leadership, although resource-related tasks remain a challenge.

3.3.3 Resource Mobilization Readiness

Resource mobilization readiness was much practiced, with a mean of 4.38. Schools demonstrated strong abilities in securing partnerships, assessing needs, and monitoring resources. Volunteer training received the lowest score. These results support De Guzman (2021), who notes that effective mobilization relies on clear goals and motivated volunteers. Sanders (2020) highlights the importance of consistent community engagement, which explains the lower score in volunteer training and capacity building.

3.3.4 Community Collaboration Readiness

Community involvement readiness was moderately practiced, with a mean of 3.29. Schools effectively informed the community of program needs, but initiation of collaboration and communication channels remained weak. This pattern aligns with Putnam (2020), who links sustained involvement to strong trust networks. Weak early-stage collaboration and inconsistent communication reflect Bryk and Schneider's (2021) argument that relational trust requires continual interaction, not event-based engagement.

3.3.5 School Collaboration Readiness

School collaboration readiness was moderate, with a mean of 3.29. Participation was strong during Brigada Eskwela but not maintained throughout the year. Meetings and joint planning were the least practiced. The results support Fullan (2021), who stresses that meaningful collaboration should be ongoing rather than episodic. Bryk (2020) also emphasizes that consistent dialogue and shared commitment are essential for long-term partnerships.

3.4 Significant Differences in Readiness Levels

Readiness levels differed significantly across organizing, leading, resource mobilization, and collaboration, with an overall mean of 4.36 classified as Much Ready. Organizing and leading displayed the highest readiness at 4.57, while community collaboration had the lowest at 3.29. ANOVA produced an F-value of 17.85, exceeding the critical value of 5.14, confirming significant differences among the variables. The significant variation supports Leithwood et al. (2020), who found that organizational leadership strongly influences school readiness. Lower readiness in community collaboration reflects Wandersman et al.'s (2018) view that partnerships mature slowly and require sustained engagement. The results suggest that although schools are structurally prepared, community involvement remains the weakest component.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concludes that Brigada Eskwela is highly organized and effectively implemented in public elementary schools, as shown by consistently high ratings in organizing, leading, and resource mobilization practices, all of which reflect strong planning, communication, and leadership among school heads and teachers. Collaboration with both internal and external stakeholders was evident, although community and school collaboration were practiced at only moderate levels, indicating that engagement tends to be concentrated during the Brigada Eskwela period rather than sustained throughout the year. The absence of significant differences between teachers' and school heads' perceptions demonstrates a shared understanding of program effectiveness and the collective value placed on coordination, volunteer participation, and school-community partnership. These findings affirm the Functional Theory of Volunteerism (Clary & Snyder, 1999) and the Community Participation Theory (Lachapelle & Austin, 2014), emphasizing that individual motivation and collective engagement underpin the continued success and sustainability of Brigada Eskwela.

Based on the study's findings, it is recommended that the implementation of Brigada Eskwela be strengthened by continuing DepEd's institutional approach to year-round engagement while enhancing monitoring and recognition systems to sustain participation. School heads are encouraged to reinforce planning and leadership mechanisms by improving volunteer coordination, ensuring adequate preparation of materials, and maintaining consistent communication with teachers, parents, and community partners. Teachers and stakeholders should remain actively involved in planning and implementation, supporting inclusivity and shared responsibility while participating in capacity-building activities related to school improvement. Future researchers are encouraged to include parents, learners, and community partners to broaden

insights on school–community engagement and to examine the long-term effects of Brigada Eskwela on school performance and community development.

Compliance with ethical standards

This study followed established institutional and academic ethical guidelines for research involving human participants. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality and responsible data handling were maintained throughout the research process.

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Conflict of interest statement

The author declares no financial or personal conflict of interest and confirms that no external party influenced the conduct or outcome of the study.

Statement of ethical approval

The study used survey-based data collection conducted with prior permission from relevant school authorities. As the research involved minimal risk, formal ethics board approval was not required and all procedures complied with accepted research ethics standards.

Statement of informed consent

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