ISSN: 3116-3475
International Journal
of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 11 (November 2026)

Brigada Eskwela Implementation in the New Normal

Irene Abril-Marquez
Bicol College, Daraga, Albay, Philippines
ireneabril.marquez@deped.gov.ph

Date Submitted:
September 23, 2026

Date Accepted:
October 10, 2026

Date Published:
November 12, 2026

DOI:
10.5281/zenodo.24152456

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic changed how the Department of Education's annual Brigada Eskwela (National Schools Maintenance Week) was carried out, as schools had to prepare for the progressive return of face-to-face classes while observing health and safety protocols. This study described the implementation of Brigada Eskwela in the new normal among the seven public secondary schools in the Municipality of Bacacay, Albay, Philippines, for School Year 2022–2023, guided by DepEd Memorandum No. 62, s. 2022. Specifically, it examined current practices along partnership engagement activities, resources generated, Bayanihan effort, impact on school performance, and school preparation effort; the enabling and hindering factors; and the issues and challenges encountered, as bases for a proposed action plan. A descriptive qualitative design was employed using focus group discussion, unstructured interviews, and document analysis of the schools' Brigada Eskwela portfolios. Thirty-five key informants—school heads, Brigada Eskwela coordinators, General Parent-Teacher Association presidents, alumni presidents, and barangay captains—were selected through total population sampling, and their responses were analyzed by identifying recurring themes. Results showed that schools relied on social media, letters, orientations, and kick-off ceremonies to engage partners; mobilized volunteers who were mostly parents; generated donations and innovative fundraising; and prioritized clean learning spaces, water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, and health protocols, which informants associated with improved facilities, higher enrollment, and fewer dropouts. Active stakeholder support, working committees, positive communication, effective advocacy, and transparency in donations enabled implementation, whereas lack of resources, limited time, and external circumstances such as weather and the pandemic hindered it. Issues included weak connectivity, geographic isolation, volunteer availability, limited and unsustained donors, and insufficient funds. The study concludes that Brigada Eskwela continued to provide safe and conducive learning environments despite the pandemic, and it proposes an action plan to strengthen partnerships, resource mobilization, and school preparation in the district.

Keywords: *Brigada Eskwela, New Normal, School–Community Partnership, Stakeholder Participation, Volunteerism, Action Plan*

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic brought considerable changes to the Philippine educational system, compelling every institution to set new rules as schools shifted to blended and distance modalities. Although face-to-face services were suspended out of concern for learners' safety, the Department of Education (DepEd) remained committed to providing quality, equitable, culture-based, and complete basic education, and its annual school-readiness program, *Brigada Eskwela*, became more important than ever as schools prepared for the eventual reopening of classes. Brigada Eskwela, also known as the National Schools Maintenance Week, was established

ISSN: 3116-3475
International Journal
of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 11 (November 2026)

in 2003 in the spirit of *Bayanihan* (communal unity and cooperation) as one of the umbrella initiatives of the Adopt-A-School Program (DepEd Memorandum No. 79, s. 2003; Republic Act No. 8525, 1998). It was institutionalized as an annual event that brings parents, alumni, civic groups, local businesses, nongovernment organizations, teachers, and students together to repair and prepare public schools before the opening of classes (DepEd Order No. 24, s. 2008), and it was launched to address the agency's resource gaps through strengthened community partnerships (Montemayor, 2019).

The pandemic redefined the program. Before COVID-19, Brigada Eskwela was held in May and focused mainly on cleaning, painting, and minor repairs of classrooms and facilities; in the new normal, its timetable was adjusted to the new school calendar, and priority shifted to infrastructure and amenities that promote health and hygiene, such as clean water, adequate ventilation, and functional handwashing facilities. Brigada Eskwela 2020 adopted the theme "Bayanihan sa Paaralan" and emphasized planning and partnership engagement to support the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (DepEd Memorandum No. 53, s. 2020; DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2020). In 2022, with the theme "Brigada Eskwela: Tugon sa Hamon ng Ligtas na Balik-Aral," the program sought to address the challenges and learning resource gaps of teachers and learners through partnership engagements, and it assessed schools along partnership engagement activities, resources generated, Bayanihan effort, impact on school performance, and school preparation effort (DepEd Memorandum No. 62, s. 2022).

Beyond retaining community participation under physical-distancing rules, the new normal Brigada Eskwela also had to contend with the economic effects of the pandemic on communities that traditionally supported schools. In the Schools Division of Albay, face-to-face classes resumed in November 2022 after two years of modular distance learning, and schools had to adjust their strategies quickly to comply with the revised guidelines on the progressive expansion of face-to-face classes (DepEd & Department of Health, 2022). Because this transition was abrupt and unprecedented, difficulties in implementation were anticipated. Previous studies on Brigada Eskwela have examined its practices, level of implementation, impact, and stakeholder support in other divisions (Balinas, 2018; Ballon, 2016; Mallapre, 2020; Noleal, 2014), and Manila and Decano (2022) explored school administrators' preparation and coping in the new normal. However, no study had yet examined the new normal implementation of Brigada Eskwela among the secondary schools of Bacacay, Albay—three of which are island schools—from the perspectives of both internal and external stakeholders.

This study therefore described the implementation of Brigada Eskwela in the new normal among the public secondary schools in the Municipality of Bacacay, Albay, for School Year 2022–2023, based on DepEd Memorandum No. 62, s. 2022. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions: (a) What are the current practices of the schools in implementing Brigada Eskwela in the new normal along partnership engagement activities, resources generated, Bayanihan effort to support Brigada Eskwela implementation, impact on school performance, and school preparation effort? (b) What are the enabling and hindering factors that affected its implementation? (c) What issues and challenges did the schools encounter in its implementation? and (d) What action plan may be proposed to improve the implementation of Brigada Eskwela in the new normal? The study focused on the regular Brigada Eskwela program and did not cover the Brigada Eskwela Plus and Brigada Pagbasa programs. Its findings are intended to inform DepEd, school heads, Brigada Eskwela coordinators, local government officials, parents, donors, and the wider community in strengthening school–community partnerships.

Literature Review

Brigada Eskwela as a School–Community Partnership Program

Stakeholders' participation in school projects and programs contributes greatly to the improvement of learning, and school and community linkages are regarded as essential ingredients in attaining quality education. Brigada Eskwela is envisioned in Republic Act No. 8525 (1998), the Adopt-A-School Act, through which private companies and individuals receive tax incentives for contributions to public education. Drawing on this support, DepEd launched Brigada Eskwela in 2003 to attract volunteers, maximize civic participation, and use local

ISSN: 3116-3475
International Journal
of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 11 (November 2026)

resources to improve public schools (DepEd Memorandum No. 79, s. 2003). DepEd Order No. 24, s. 2008 institutionalized it as a nationwide, week-long maintenance program in which local communities, parents, alumni, civic groups, corporations, nongovernment organizations, private individuals, teachers, and students contribute time and skills to small-to-medium repairs and maintenance before classes open.

The program has expanded over time. According to DepEd officials, the campaign was established to address resource gaps through strengthened partnerships with communities, and its concept was broadened in 2017 to ensure that schools were not only clean and attractive but also safe and prepared for disasters (Montemayor, 2019). Paren (2015) observed that Brigada Eskwela draws on the Filipino's natural, positive response in times of need—the Bayanihan system of mutual volunteerism—and fosters among students and the youth the value of civic action and social responsibility. Its success depends largely on the initiative of school heads and Brigada Eskwela coordinators, who organize committees, assign responsibilities, and find creative ways to connect with internal and external stakeholders.

Brigada Eskwela in the New Normal

The pandemic required DepEd to redesign Brigada Eskwela. Under DepEd Memorandum No. 53, s. 2020, the 2020 Brigada Eskwela and Oplan Balik Eskwela were implemented together under the theme "Bayanihan sa Paaralan," shifting the focus from physical repairs to planning and partnership engagement that would ensure learning continuity under the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2020). In addition to usual activities, school heads, volunteers, and local government units were expected to clean and sanitize buildings and classrooms in compliance with health standards.

For School Year 2022–2023, DepEd Memorandum No. 62, s. 2022 framed Brigada Eskwela around the theme "Tugon sa Hamon ng Ligtas na Balik-Aral," directing schools to address challenges and learning resource gaps through partnership engagements at local and national levels and to create safe learning environments for learners and personnel. The guidelines assessed implementation along five areas—partnership engagement activities, resources generated, Bayanihan effort, impact on school performance, and school preparation effort—which served as the areas examined in this study. Health-related preparations were also anchored on the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools (WinS) program (DepEd Order No. 10, s. 2016) and on public health guidance on the use of masks, physical distancing, and hand hygiene (Chu et al., 2020; World Health Organization [WHO], 2020).

Related Studies on Brigada Eskwela Implementation

Several studies have examined the implementation of Brigada Eskwela. Manila and Decano (2022) explored the experiences of secondary and integrated school administrators in Davao City in implementing Brigada Eskwela in the new normal and found that administrators prepared for the program's transition, overcame challenges, and developed coping mechanisms, with collaboration and partnerships addressing their resource and training needs. Alave and Ancho (2020) documented the experiences of rural school leaders in outsourcing funds for school opening and identified best practices that helped them deal with the complexities of resource mobilization. Mallapre (2020) described the practices of Brigada Eskwela best-implementing schools in the Division of Sorsogon across the pre-implementation, implementation, and post-implementation stages, the factors to which their success was attributed, and a plan to disseminate these practices.

Other studies assessed implementation outcomes and stakeholder involvement. Noleal (2014) found that the accomplishments of Brigada Eskwela in selected schools of Jovellar, Albay, included completed projects on physical facilities, diverse volunteer participation, and generated resources, with impacts on physical facilities, school–community relationships, and pupils' welfare. Ballon (2016) assessed the accomplishments of Brigada Eskwela committees in Legazpi City, and Belbes (2016) assessed the program as a school–community resource strategy in Sto. Domingo, Albay, including the difficulties encountered by working committees. Balinas (2018) determined the level of stakeholders' support in terms of volunteer participation and resources generated in Negros Occidental, while Montiveros (2018) found that Brigada Eskwela had the highest stakeholder engagement under

ISSN: 3116-3475
International Journal
of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 11 (November 2026)

parent and community partnership programs in Legazpi City. Cabardo (2016) examined stakeholders' participation in school-initiated activities in relation to school-based management, and Ala (2008) reported a very satisfactory school–community relationship but only moderate community involvement in school activities.

Studies on best practices and outcomes further informed this research. Olaivar and Pobar (2017) linked the implementation of Brigada Eskwela and disaster preparedness programs to pupils' academic achievement, while Celestial (2015) and Espiritu (2019) examined the extent of implementation and the management innovations of Brigada Eskwela implementers. Collectively, these studies focused on the practices, partnership strategies, level of implementation, and impacts of Brigada Eskwela, mostly before the pandemic and in elementary schools or other divisions. Few studies examined the new normal implementation from the combined perspectives of school heads, coordinators, parents, alumni, and barangay officials, particularly in island and mainland secondary schools; this study addressed that gap.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The study was anchored on three theories. The Theory of Unified Responsibility (Dutta-Bergman, 2004) suggests that the underlying notion of responsible living that drives individuals to take charge of their well-being may also lead them to volunteer their time for community organizations, explaining stakeholders' voluntary participation in Brigada Eskwela. Elliott's (2007) general theory of collaboration distinguishes three distinct but interrelated processes—coordination, cooperation, and collaboration—with coordination at the starting point and collaboration at the highest level of complexity, reflecting the progressively deeper working relationships among the school and its stakeholders. Bass's (1985) Transformational Leadership Theory holds that leaders who earn trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect inspire followers to work harder than they thought possible through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, which highlights the role of school heads and coordinators in mobilizing stakeholders.

Taken together, these theories frame Brigada Eskwela in the new normal as a joint undertaking in which internal and external stakeholders work hand in hand, with respect and trust, while following mandated safety protocols, each contributing what they can so that, combined, their efforts make a meaningful difference for learners. As shown in Figure 1, the study examined the Brigada Eskwela practices of the schools, the enabling and hindering factors in implementation, and the issues and challenges encountered—each along partnership engagement activities, resources generated, Bayanihan effort, impact on school performance, and school preparation effort. These three components served as the bases for the proposed action plan to improve Brigada Eskwela implementation in the secondary schools of Bacacay.

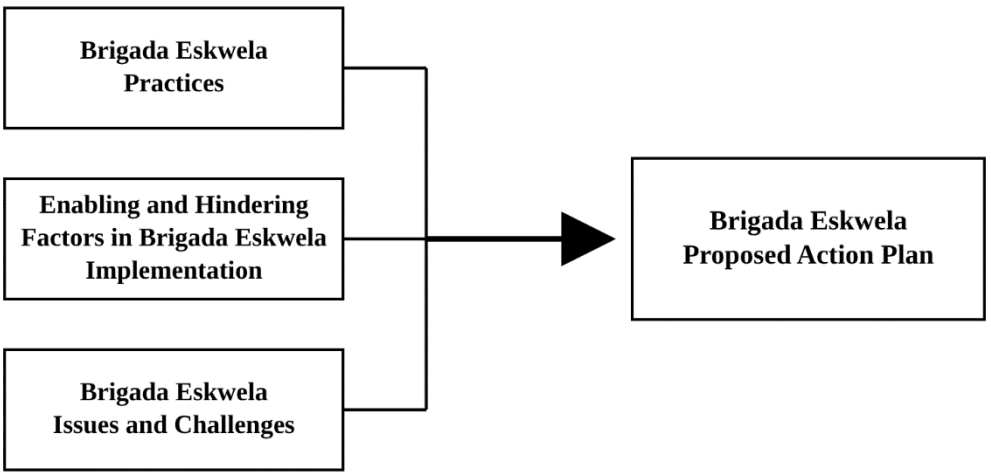


Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework of the Study*

ISSN: 3116-3475
International Journal
of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 11 (November 2026)

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive qualitative design, which generates non-numerical data that provide insight into social phenomena from the perspectives of those who experience them (Merriam, 2009) and seeks to understand individuals' or groups lived experiences of social or human problems (Creswell, 2014). Three data collection methods were used: focus group discussion (FGD), unstructured interviews, and document analysis of the schools' Brigada Eskwela portfolios for School Year 2022–2023. The data were interpreted in relation to DepEd Memorandum No. 62, s. 2022 and to the theories of unified responsibility, collaboration, and transformational leadership.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in the seven public secondary schools of the Municipality of Bacacay, Albay, which are distributed across three districts—Bacacay East, Bacacay West, and Bacacay South. Four schools are located on the mainland (Vinisitahan, Sogod, Pili, and Bonga National High Schools) and three are island schools (San Pablo, Cawayan, and Cabasan National High Schools). Private secondary schools and elementary schools were excluded.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The key informants were 35 stakeholders—the school head, Brigada Eskwela coordinator, General Parent-Teacher Association (GPTA) president, alumni president, and barangay captain of each of the seven schools. Total population sampling, a form of purposive sampling in which all members of a small population sharing a specific characteristic are included, was used so that all relevant stakeholders were represented and a comprehensive understanding of the issues could be obtained. To protect their identities, informants were referred to by codes indicating their role and school (e.g., SH for school head, BE for Brigada Eskwela coordinator, BC for barangay captain, AR for alumni representative, and PA for parent).

Research Instrument

Three instruments were used: FGD guide questions, unstructured interview questions, and a document analysis guide. The FGD guide consisted of open-ended, exploratory questions that encouraged participants to share their ideas and experiences while keeping the discussion focused on the research topic. The unstructured interviews used open-ended questions with follow-up queries to clarify or deepen responses. The document analysis guide directed the review of the schools' Brigada Eskwela portfolios. The interview and FGD guides were evaluated and validated by Division and District Brigada Eskwela coordinators using a content validation checklist, while the proposed action plan was evaluated by an Adopt-A-School coordinator, a master teacher, and a Brigada Eskwela coordinator using a rubric.

Data Gathering Procedure

After the instruments were validated, permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Schools Division Superintendent of Albay and then from the Public Schools District Supervisors of Bacacay East, West, and South. Schedules were arranged with the school heads through letters, and the school heads coordinated with their School Governing Councils to gather the key informants. The FGD with Brigada Eskwela coordinators was conducted online through Google Meet and Messenger, and interviews were conducted with the school heads, coordinators, GPTA presidents, alumni presidents, and barangay captains. The researcher used three languages to elicit the informants' experiences, interviewed some informants separately when they were uncomfortable in each other's presence, and conducted group interviews when requested. Brigada Eskwela portfolios were requested and reviewed for document analysis.

ISSN: 3116-3475
International Journal
of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 11 (November 2026)

Data Analysis

Data from the FGD, interviews, and documents were collated, analyzed, and interpreted together with the schools' reports on Brigada Eskwela implementation for School Year 2022–2023. Responses were examined for recurring themes under each research question and each implementation area, and representative verbatim statements, translated into English, were used to support the themes. On the basis of the identified hindering factors, issues, and challenges, an action plan was crafted and then validated and evaluated by jurors with expertise in community linkages and programs.

Ethical Consideration

The study was conducted with the approval of the Schools Division Superintendent, the Public Schools District Supervisors, and the school heads concerned. Informants were asked for permission before interviews were recorded, and no recording was made for those who declined. To ensure privacy and facilitate discussion, informants' names were withheld and replaced with codes, and their responses were presented as they were shared.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Current Practices in Implementing Brigada Eskwela in the New Normal

The current practices of the secondary schools in Bacacay were organized according to the five areas of DepEd Memorandum No. 62, s. 2022. Table 1 presents the recurring themes that emerged in each area.

Table 1. *Current Practices of Brigada Eskwela in the New Normal*

Area	Recurring Themes
Partnership engagement activities	Information dissemination strategies; school-initiated activities, programs, and projects
Resources generated	Man, voluntary services; donations and solicitations; Brigada Eskwela innovations
Bayanihan effort to support implementation	Community participation; community awareness of the education program of the school
Impact on school performance	Improvement of learning centers and school facilities; impact on enrollment and participation
School preparation effort	Clean and conducive learning centers; water, sanitation, and hygiene in schools; compliance with health protocols; school safety and disaster preparedness

Note. Themes were drawn from the FGD, interviews, and document analysis of the seven schools' Brigada Eskwela portfolios.

Partnership Engagement Activities

All seven schools adapted their information dissemination strategies to the pandemic. Every informant cited social media—schools' official Facebook pages, Messenger, and group chats—as the most common way of informing parents and potential partners, which proved valuable when mobility was limited. Schools continued traditional practices as well, such as sending letters of invitation to stakeholders, conducting orientation meetings with parents before the opening of classes, posting tarpaulins, and holding motorcades or caravans; schools also used the "bandito" strategy, which Mallapre (2020) likewise found effective in encouraging donors, sponsors, and volunteers. These results are consistent with Olaivar and Pobar (2017), who reported that information dissemination, networking with stakeholders, and community immersion supported school programs.

The schools also initiated activities, programs, and projects. All informants identified the clean-up drive as the yearly core activity, which schools named in their own ways, such as "Clean and Green," "Project Ganda," "Project Bayanihan," "Project Punla," and "Barangay Mo, Linig Mo." Other initiatives included a feeding program ("Project Lugaw") and medical assistance for learners and community members ("Project Mission").

ISSN: 3116-3475
International Journal
of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 11 (November 2026)

These activities provided opportunities for schools to engage their communities and reflect the cooperative and collaborative processes described by Elliott (2007).

Resources Generated

Volunteer services remained the main resource. Attendance records showed that 50% of volunteers were parents, 20% alumni, 10% private partners, 10% local government units, and 10% other government agencies such as the municipal health center, the Philippine National Police, the Bureau of Fire Protection, and barangay health workers. In one school, volunteers rendered 2,948 man-hours of physical maintenance and clean-up, equivalent to ₱300,926.00. Schools also generated donations through solicitation letters sent by chat and e-mail and accepted cash donations through G-cash and fund transfers, with alumni consistently donating even when they could not attend in person. In addition, schools innovated fundraising activities supported by project proposals, such as a "Commitment Tree" in which volunteers bought leaves for five pesos each, tarpaulin printing sponsorships, bingo, and a "Variety Show." As one school head stated, "If the Brigada Eskwela coordinator is creative, responsible, and has the initiative, then implementing Brigada Eskwela is just a piece of cake" (SH6). These findings parallel those of Alave and Ancho (2020) on the importance of school leaders' strategies in outsourcing funds and Balinas (2018) on stakeholders' support through volunteer participation and resource generation.

Bayanihan Effort to Support Brigada Eskwela Implementation

Community participation began at the planning stage, when representatives of the barangay council, the GPTA, and the School Governing Council were invited to help plan Brigada Eskwela activities, and volunteers were clustered by barangay to comply with health protocols. Proper coordination with parents, alumni associations, local government units, and agencies was emphasized; one barangay captain explained that the barangay supported school programs once it received the school's letter. Leaders of the Agta-Tabangnon indigenous community in one school encouraged their members to participate even without invitation, bringing bananas, cassava, and rice and cooking for the volunteers, while 4Ps (Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program) parent leaders likewise participated actively. To raise community awareness of the schools' education programs, schools held kick-off ceremonies, motorcades, and caravans; informants considered the kick-off ceremony the most effective, as it brought officials and partners to the school to see its needs firsthand. These practices illustrate the volunteerism rooted in responsible living described by the Theory of Unified Responsibility (Dutta-Bergman, 2004) and the Bayanihan spirit noted by Paren (2015).

Impact on School Performance

Informants associated Brigada Eskwela with improved learning centers and physical facilities. Parents painted, cleaned, and repaired tables, chairs, windows, fences, and learning hubs; one school head described the school as having become "lively, clean, colorful, conducive to learning, and child friendly" because of Brigada Eskwela (SH6). The program also helped raise funds for the Pili National High School TVL/TLE fishpond project for agri-fishery learners. Four of the seven schools—Vinisitahan, Bonga, and Pili National High Schools on the mainland and Cabasan National High School on an island—reported increased enrollment, averaging 3% over the previous school year. Cabasan and Vinisitahan National High Schools recorded that 20% of their enrollees were Balik-Aral (returning) learners, the dropout rate decreased by 2%, and absenteeism was reduced. A coordinator noted that students felt the return to school because of the new, functional, and colorful environment (BE4). These results support Noleal (2014), who found that Brigada Eskwela improved physical facilities, school–community relationships, and pupils' welfare, and Olaivar and Pobar (2017), who linked the program to learners' achievement.

School Preparation Effort

All seven schools reported that Brigada Eskwela prepared clean and conducive learning centers through cleaning, painting, and repairing fences, classrooms, and learning spaces. Under the WinS program (DepEd Order

ISSN: 3116-3475
International Journal
of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 11 (November 2026)

No. 10, s. 2016), schools—particularly island schools, according to SH2, SH5, and SH7—reached out to partners for water facilities, comfort rooms, and handwashing areas, and all coordinators and school heads sought donors of health essentials. Schools established minimum health protocols during implementation, including the wearing of masks, physical distancing, and hand hygiene, which are recognized as effective measures against COVID-19 transmission (Chu et al., 2020; WHO, 2020). Classrooms were structured for progressive face-to-face classes, with COVID-19, disaster preparedness, and safety posters, marked entrances and exits, and physically distanced seating. These practices show that the program's preparation effort shifted from physical improvement alone to ensuring health, safety, and disaster preparedness in the new normal.

Enabling and Hindering Factors in Brigada Eskwela Implementation

Table 2 presents the factors that enabled the implementation of Brigada Eskwela in the new normal, with representative verbatim responses of the key informants.

Table 2. *Enabling Factors in the Implementation of Brigada Eskwela in the New Normal*

Recurring Theme	Representative Verbatim Responses (English Translation)
Active participation and support of stakeholders	"There is volunteerism of the alumni, parents, and the barangay council to help in the activities of our school."
Creation of a working committee	"We have a division of labor to facilitate our work." "Before the school year ends, we should have planned what to do during the Brigada Eskwela so that we already know our roles when we return." "We include the SGC in our planning."
Positive attitude in communicating with stakeholders	"Even when the work is hard, as long as we work together and laugh together, we do not feel tired." "The school and community develop a close relationship, especially among parents."
Effective advocacy strategies	"Pakihuron and pakitugon (request and reminder strategies)." "Social media has been a great help, especially at this time when movements are limited."
Transparency of donations	"It is better to be transparent so that doubt will be avoided."

Note. Responses were originally given in Bikol or Filipino and translated into English by the researcher.

Active participation and support of stakeholders was the foremost enabling factor. Although health protocols were still in effect, teachers, parents, local officials, alumni, and other partners participated actively, consistent with the findings of Montiveros (2018) and Balinas (2018) that stakeholder engagement is central to the program. Working committees—such as advocacy and marketing, resource mobilization, and other committees prescribed in the Brigada Eskwela manual—were organized before implementation, strengthening the bond among teachers, parents, and volunteers and clarifying roles, which echoes the committee accomplishments documented by Ballon (2016) and Belbes (2016).

A positive attitude in communicating with stakeholders also sustained participation. Schools reached out to barangay officials and parents personally and recognized volunteers' efforts through certificates of recognition, and one school held a "Variety Show" night on the last day of Brigada Eskwela to honor its stakeholders. Effective advocacy strategies, planned during meetings of school heads, coordinators, and committee members, combined request and reminder ("pakihuron and pakitugon") with social media. Finally, transparency in donations built trust: school heads and coordinators monitored donations through Deeds of Donation and posted financial and accomplishment reports on the schools' group chats and official Facebook pages, which, according to SH1, widened communication and increased stakeholder participation. These enabling factors reflect the trust- and inspiration-based leadership described by Bass (1985) and the progression from coordination to collaboration described by Elliott (2007).

Table 3 presents the hindering factors identified by the key informants.

ISSN: 3116-3475
International Journal
of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 11 (November 2026)

Table 3. *Hindering Factors in the Implementation of Brigada Eskwela in the New Normal*

Recurring Theme	Representative Verbatim Responses (English Translation)
Lack of resources	"The workers are there, but there is no money." "We even solicit money to buy cold water because our financial resources are really depleted." "We look for donors everywhere. Even when it is embarrassing, we do it for the sake of our learners."
Time management	"During our Brigada, I did not know what to begin with. I was the safety officer and at the same time the documenter. I was also the Brigada Eskwela coordinator." "The time for accomplishing the reports is limited."
External circumstances such as weather and the pandemic	"When there happens to be stormy weather during the Brigada, very few to none of the parents come because there is a gale warning. The parents and students cannot cross." "I cannot work with a face mask on; I cannot breathe." "Parents are afraid to go out of their houses because of COVID."

Note. Responses were originally given in Bikol or Filipino and translated into English by the researcher.

Lack of resources was a major hindering factor. School heads had many plans for the reopening of face-to-face classes but lacked the means to realize them, as schools needed additional resources for health and safety requirements such as face masks, thermal scanners, medicines, soap, sanitizers, handwashing areas, and water facilities. Schools adopting blended learning also needed equipment for online and digital modular delivery that their Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) could not cover. Time was the second major constraint: when the Joint Memorandum Circular on the progressive expansion of face-to-face classes was released in April 2022 (DepEd & Department of Health, 2022), school administrators had limited time to comply with the School Safety Assessment Tool, prepare the Brigada Eskwela portfolio, and carry out overlapping tasks.

External circumstances further constrained implementation. During rainy days and gale warnings, parents and students from island communities could not cross to the schools, and volunteers found it difficult to work while wearing face masks. Fear of COVID-19 kept some parents at home, and physical-distancing requirements limited the number of volunteers who could work at a time. These factors are consistent with Manila and Decano's (2022) finding that school administrators faced resource and contextual challenges in implementing Brigada Eskwela in the new normal.

Issues and Challenges Encountered in Implementing Brigada Eskwela

Table 4 summarizes the issues and challenges encountered by the schools in each implementation area. No issue or challenge was identified along the Bayanihan effort, as informants' enthusiastic participation throughout the week-long activity indicated that the Bayanihan spirit remained strong.

Table 4. *Issues and Challenges Encountered in Implementing Brigada Eskwela in the New Normal*

Area	Recurring Themes
Partnership engagement activities	Marketing strategies; size and geographical location of the school; availability of volunteers
Resources generated	Limited stakeholders and donors; sustainability of donors
Impact on school performance	Change of learning modality; alignment of Brigada Eskwela programs with school performance indicators
School preparation effort	Distance of the school; weather and climate; time management; financial problems

Along partnership engagement, although social media was the main channel, informants from island schools reported weak or absent signals; teachers and coordinators sometimes had to climb hills to send messages to partners and volunteers, which also exposed them to danger, so they resorted to creative, traditional ways of inviting volunteers. Smaller schools had fewer volunteers, and schools far from ports faced costly logistics; one coordinator said that "hauling of the donations is very expensive since they are heavy and need to be transported by sea" (BE2). The availability of volunteers was also limited: some alumni no longer lived in the area and gave

ISSN: 3116-3475
International Journal
of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 11 (November 2026)

cash instead of volunteering, some residents chose work over volunteering as they recovered from the pandemic's economic effects, and one school had to plead with residents to join the clean-up drive. Barangay officials noted that their efforts were not recognized by the school, making cooperation difficult, and a parent observed that poorly organized implementation discouraged parents from participating.

Along resources generated, schools had limited stakeholders and donors, which affected the morale of teachers and volunteers, and they found it difficult to sustain donors from year to year, which in turn affected their capacity to plan future campaigns. Along impact on school performance, the change of learning modality redirected resources toward the requirements of face-to-face, online, and modular delivery, and a barangay captain observed that some Brigada Eskwela activities "lack a clear focus on addressing the unique requirements of the school" (BC7), pointing to the need to align activities with school performance indicators. Along school preparation effort, distance hindered the participation of volunteers and the transport of materials; rain made paths slippery and unsafe for parents walking to school; overlapping responsibilities left coordinators—who were also safety officers or property custodians—unable to focus on Brigada Eskwela tasks; and school heads reported difficulty sourcing funds because MOOE was limited. As SH3 stated, "We are challenged to source out funds, especially now that we have limited MOOE to fund the Brigada activities." These challenges are consistent with earlier reports that the success of Brigada Eskwela depends on stakeholder support and resource generation (Alave & Ancho, 2020; Balinas, 2018) and with Ala's (2008) observation that community involvement in school activities may lag behind the quality of school–community relations.

Proposed Action Plan to Improve Brigada Eskwela Implementation

On the basis of the hindering factors, issues, and challenges identified, an action plan titled "Action Plan to Improve Brigada Eskwela Implementation in the New Normal" was developed and validated by jurors. Its general objective is to guide and improve Brigada Eskwela implementation in the secondary schools of Bacacay with a focus on safety, equity, and quality in education. Its specific objectives are to enhance community engagement strategies, provide guidance and resources to address the needs of learners and stakeholders, facilitate partnerships among schools, local government units, nongovernment organizations, and the private sector, promote the use of innovative technologies, and disseminate current practices and lessons learned. The three districts of Bacacay serve as lead implementing units, with the Public Schools District Supervisors, school heads, and Brigada Eskwela coordinators of the secondary schools as participating units. A district forum and orientation is budgeted at ₱5,500.00 (food, ₱3,500.00; printing of the action plan, ₱1,000.00; miscellaneous, ₱1,000.00), to be funded by school MOOE, the PTA fund, or solicitation. Table 5 summarizes the key components of the plan.

ISSN: 3116-3475
International Journal
of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 11 (November 2026)

Table 5. Summary of the Proposed Action Plan to Improve Brigada Eskwela Implementation

Area of Concern	Objectives	Key Strategies/Activities	Responsible Persons
Partnership engagement activities	Strengthen partnerships; reach more partners through social media; update partners on progress; present accomplishments; promote health and well-being	Coordinate school needs with staff; develop an online Brigada Eskwela platform; craft an annual action plan; forge agreements with target partners; accomplish BE forms; distribute hygiene kits and snacks	School head, BE coordinator, teachers, target partners, barangay council, SK, private organizations
Resources generated	Sustain maintenance and partnerships; develop sustainable fundraising; build partnerships with donors	Sustain BE implementation; prepare fundraising proposals; accept in-kind and cash donations (including bank and G-cash)	School head, BE coordinator, teachers, stakeholders
Bayanihan effort	Encourage active participation of parents and students	Increase awareness and engagement of parents and students	BE coordinator, teachers in charge
School preparation effort	Promote health, safety, and a positive school culture; provide accessible learning resources; ensure coordination; recognize stakeholders	Construct handwashing facilities, benches, learning kiosks, and a reading hub; online training on health protocols; repair classrooms and furniture; post signages; maintain Gulayan sa Paaralan; form BE committees; literacy and numeracy support; recognize stakeholders	GPTA, parents, alumni, 4Ps, barangay council, private individuals and organizations, volunteer readers, school head, BE coordinator
Impact on school performance	Improve volunteer engagement; identify successes and challenges	Gather volunteer feedback; develop a monitoring and evaluation system for BE activities	School head, BE coordinator, committee chairs, teachers, stakeholders

Note. Activities are scheduled from May to November or year-round and are delivered face-to-face with observance of health and safety protocols, online, or both. All activities are managed, monitored, and evaluated by the District Brigada Eskwela Coordinator in coordination with the Public Schools District Supervisor and the secondary school heads.

The action plan responds directly to the findings. Online platforms and sustained partner updates address the marketing and communication gaps, fundraising proposals and transparent donation channels address limited and unsustained donors, early formation of committees and stakeholder recognition address time management and volunteer availability, and a monitoring and evaluation system addresses the alignment of activities with school performance indicators. In this way, the plan operationalizes the coordination, cooperation, and collaboration processes (Elliott, 2007) and the shared responsibility for education (Dutta-Bergman, 2004) that underpin Brigada Eskwela.

CONCLUSION

The study described the implementation of Brigada Eskwela in the new normal among the seven public secondary schools of Bacacay, Albay. Through Brigada Eskwela, schools continued to provide a safe and conducive learning environment for students despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, using adapted partnership engagement, resource generation, and school preparation practices and drawing on the enduring Bayanihan spirit of their communities. Enabling factors—active stakeholder participation, working committees, positive communication, effective advocacy, and transparency in donations—contributed significantly to the success of the program, whereas hindering factors such as lack of resources, limited time, and external circumstances must be overcome so that the program can continue to thrive. The issues and challenges

identified, particularly those related to connectivity, geographic location, volunteer availability, donor sustainability, and funding, should be addressed to ensure the continued success of Brigada Eskwela and its positive impact on students and communities in the long run. The proposed action plan provides a basis for addressing these concerns and needs to be implemented.

Recommendation

In light of the findings and conclusions, the following are recommended. School heads and Brigada Eskwela coordinators may consider the identified current practices in partnership engagement, resource generation, Bayanihan effort, school preparation, and impact on school performance for improvement, adoption, and replication in other schools in the district and in the Schools Division of Albay. School heads, coordinators, and teachers may further strengthen the enabling factors while addressing the hindering factors, particularly through early planning, clear division of tasks, and transparent reporting of donations. Schools, barangay councils, parents, alumni, and other stakeholders may observe proper coordination, cooperation, and collaboration to strengthen their partnership, including due recognition of the contributions of all volunteers.

The Public Schools District Supervisors and the Schools Division of Albay may implement the proposed action plan in toto or modify it to better improve Brigada Eskwela implementation in the district and division. Future researchers may conduct a case study of the experiences of Brigada Eskwela coordinators during the pandemic; a comparative study of new normal and pre-pandemic implementation to identify differences, similarities, and best practices; a stakeholder analysis of perspectives and involvement in the new normal; a sustainability study of the program's long-term challenges and opportunities; and a study of the innovative and adaptive practices schools developed to maintain the program's effectiveness.

References

Ala, S. A. (2008). *School–community relations in Barangay Bigaa, Legazpi City* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Bicol University Graduate School.

Alave, J. C., & Ancho, I. V. (2020). Outsourcing funds for the preparation of school opening: The experiences and best practices of rural public schools. *Journal of Community Development Research (Humanities and Social Sciences), 13*(1), 19–27. https://doi.org/10.14456/jcdr-hs.2020.2

Balinas, J. F. (2018). Stakeholders support in the Brigada Eskwela program of Department of Education in the Division of Negros Occidental, Philippines. *Journal of Education and Technology Management, 1*(1).

Ballon, J. D. M. (2016). *Assessment of Brigada Eskwela program implementation* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Bicol University Graduate School.

Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. Free Press.

Belbes, W. M. (2016). *Brigada Eskwela as a school-community resource strategy of Department of Education Sto. Domingo District in Albay* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Bicol University Graduate School.

Cabardo, J. R. O. (2016). Levels of participation of the school stakeholders to the different school-initiated activities and the implementation of school-based management. *Journal of Inquiry and Action in Education, 8*(1), Article 5. https://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/jiae/vol8/iss1/5

Celestial, M. (2015). *Extent of implementation of Brigada Eskwela: Basis for an action plan* [Master's thesis]. University of Mindanao.

Chu, D. K., Akl, E. A., Duda, S., Solo, K., Yaacoub, S., Schünemann, H. J., & COVID-19 Systematic Urgent Review Group Effort (SURGE) study authors. (2020). Physical distancing, face masks, and eye protection to prevent person-to-person transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *The Lancet, 395*(10242), 1973–1987. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)31142-9

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Department of Education. (2003). *Brigada Eskwela (National Schools Maintenance Week)* (DepEd Memorandum No. 79, s. 2003).

Department of Education. (2008). *Institutionalization of Brigada Eskwela Program or the National Schools Maintenance Week* (DepEd Order No. 24, s. 2008).

Department of Education. (2016). *Policy and guidelines for the comprehensive water, sanitation and hygiene in schools (WinS) program* (DepEd Order No. 10, s. 2016).

Department of Education. (2020a). *Adoption of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan for School Year 2020–2021 in light of the COVID-19 public health emergency* (DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2020).

Department of Education. (2020b). *Joint implementing guidelines on the 2020 Brigada Eskwela and Oplan Balik Eskwela relative to the COVID-19 situation* (DepEd Memorandum No. 53, s. 2020).

Department of Education. (2022). *2022 Brigada Eskwela implementing guidelines* (DepEd Memorandum No. 62, s. 2022).

Department of Education & Department of Health. (2022). *Revised operational guidelines on the progressive expansion of face-to-face learning modality* (Joint Memorandum Circular No. 001, s. 2022).

Dutta-Bergman, M. J. (2004). Describing volunteerism: The theory of unified responsibility. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 16*(4), 353–369. https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532754xjprr1604_2

Elliott, M. (2007). *Stigmergic collaboration: A theoretical framework for mass collaboration* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Melbourne].

Espiritu, C. M. (2019). *Best practices and significant management innovations of Brigada Eskwela Hall of Famers in the Schools Division of Camarines Norte* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Bicol University Graduate School.

Mallapre, D. M. (2020). *Practices of Brigada Eskwela program best implementing schools in the Division of Sorsogon* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Bicol University Graduate School.

Manila, R. F., & Decano, R. S. (2022). School administrators' preparation, challenges, and coping mechanism in the implementation of Brigada Eskwela in the new normal. *EPRA International Journal of Environmental Economics, Commerce and Educational Management, 9*(1). https://doi.org/10.36713/epra9298

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Jossey-Bass.

Montemayor, M. T. (2019). *Working together towards quality education*. Philippine News Agency. https://www.pna.gov.ph

Montiveros, L. F. (2018). *Stakeholders' engagement in school programs and projects in the Department of Education, Legazpi City* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Bicol University Graduate School.

Noleal, M. O., Jr. (2014). *The implementation of Brigada Eskwela in the selected schools of Jovellar, Albay* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Bicol University Graduate School.

Olaivar, N. M. G., & Pobar, R. A. (2017). Brigada Eskwela and disaster preparedness as an approach to pupils' academic achievement. *International Journal of Environmental and Rural Development, 8*(2), 82–87. https://doi.org/10.32115/ijerd.8.2_82

Paren, R. (2015). *Perception of stakeholders to Brigada Eskwela of Kidapawan City National High School*. http://rimmon-educationinthephilippines.blogspot.com/2015/08/perception-of-stakeholders-to-brigada.html

Republic Act No. 8525. (1998). *Adopt-A-School Act of 1998*. https://lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra1998/ra_8525_1998.html

World Health Organization. (2020). *Advice on the use of masks in the context of COVID-19: Interim guidance, 5 June 2020*. World Health Organization.