BRIGADA ESKWELA DURING THE PANDEMIC

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Filipino hearts always long for the nation’s welfare and success. To achieve the nation’s long-term vision, it is important to strengthen the quality of education. Even in the time of pandemic, the government, local sectors, and other stakeholders show some love and compassion for each and every school. These stakeholders are still actively doing their part to achieve the Department of Education’s mission through participation in Brigada Eskwela.

DepEd Order No. 24, series of 2008 states that, “The Brigada Eskwela is a schools maintenance program nationwide that engages all education stakeholders to contribute their time, efforts and resources in ensuring that public schools are all set in time for class opening. It is a week-long event where local communities, parents, alumni, civic groups, local businesses, NGOs, private individuals and even teachers and students volunteer their time and skills to do minor to medium repairs and maintenance work in the schools.”

Nevertheless, the Brigada Eskwela became different in this time of pandemic. The Inter-Agency Task Force released an “Omnibus Guidelines on the Implementation of Community Quarantine in the Philippines”. The guidelines include the presence of “Skeleton Workforce” which is defined as operational capacity which utilizes the smallest number of people needed for an organization to maintain their basic function. Thus, the remarkable Brigada Eskwela switch its purpose into meaningful one. The Learning Continuity Plan (LCP) of every school includes the Brigada Eskwela and Oplan Balik Aral.
In line with this, teacher-advisers tried different ways to reach learner’s parent or guardian for a remote enrollment. They invested their time, money, and effort to call and interview parents and ask about their current life situation during the pandemic. Moreover, they discussed with the parents the learning delivery modalities as well as the possible scenario for the school year 2020-2021.

Also, the Balik-Aral and repeaters were given a chance to enroll this coming school year considering that there is no face-to-face class and they can study at home at their own pace. The students from the low-income families also benefit in the modular distance learning since it is highly adapted by schools. There will be no hindrance to continue learning even in this trying times. Even the local government is continuously assisting teachers to reach for the students ensuring that no one will be left behind.

Additionally, schools have conducted a pilot program on Distance Learning Modalities to test their effectivity in the teaching-learning process. The result of this trial helped the School Leaders to create a better plan and decide what learning delivery modality is best to adapt in their respective school in the new normal scenario of education.

Moreover, the partnership of school and community is truly necessary. Aside from the government, the community is also the backbone of every school. Each of the said stakeholders invests their time and efforts to support the school in this time of pandemic. Some have donated face masks, face shields, disinfectants, alcohol, and other COVID-19 related supplies to ensure the protection of teachers against the infectious disease they may acquire when they are already in their area of work. As DepEd Secretary Briones said, “The first principle that we adhered to and which we are committed to, in compliance with the President’s directive is to protect the safety, health, and well-being of our learners, teachers, and personnel and to prevent further transmission of COVID-19”. Safety of the teachers and school officials is also the safety of the education as well as the whole community.
Donation is not only about the money and materials we give, but also about the support and effort we exert. This is to make sure that the school is safe and prepared for the start of the new normal school year.

Indeed, Bridaga Eskwela in the time of pandemic is still a remarkable one in every school. As education continues, Bayanihan never stops. Collaboration and coordination of both family and school as well as the community will still outlast the education.

References: