ON ATTAINING PROGRESS
(THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DEPED’S BRIGADA ESKWELA PROGRAM)

by:
April A. Gumayagay

Since time immemorial, Filipinos are known to be accommodating. “Bayanihan” is a core essence of the Filipino culture. It is about helping others and doing a task together to make the job easier. This practice was common in the rural areas before. The Filipino “bahay-kubo” can be moved from the old place to the new one with this thing called “bayanihan”.

In the same manner, as the Department of Education (DepEd) started the first kick-off of Brigada Eskwela in 2003, stakeholders both internal and external showed much enthusiasm in supporting this platform. Brigada Eskwela is popularly known in the country as the Bayanihan Para Sa Paaralan. It is a nationwide voluntary effort of all stakeholders such as the teachers, parents, students, community members, and other organizations in preparation for the start of the school year.

Brigada Eskwela began in 2003. From that time, it was part of the Oplan Balik Eskwela and National Maintenance Week of the education department. It encourages everyone to render their time, effort, and even donate materials preferably hardware materials which could be used for minor repairs and building. Donations from local corporations and businesses are given in kind.

In a press conference, DepEd Asst. Sec. Tonisito Umali recalled how Brigada Eskwela effort evolved since its first implementation. He stated that in 2003, joining Brigada Eskwela was not yet mandatory but in 2007, it increased to 100 percent school voluntary
participation. Subsequently, this led to the issuance of an order in 2008 which enjoined all schools to participate in the Brigada Eskwela activities yearly.

The program does not only deal with donations in cash or in-kind. Parents and other stakeholders can also render their time and effort on conducting minor repairs and even clean-ups. Brigada Eskwela’s success can be attributed to the sensible implementation of the school head and B.E. Coordinator, together with the teachers and community stakeholders who take an active part in valuing education. The more volunteers participate, the better the school would become.

With this in view, it can therefore be stated that this initiative from the education department is a success. For real, progress in public schools is at hand through Brigada Eskwela. While it is true that the school has Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses, we cannot deny the fact this is not enough for school improvement purposes. As everybody would agree, more heads are better than one. The support coming from various stakeholders do matter in the development of public schools whether in elementary or in the secondary.

References: