

Best Practices on Brigada Eskwela of Celso F. Falcotelo National High School: A Case Study

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Abstract— This case study examines the best practices of Brigada Eskwela at Celso F. Falcotelo National High School (CFFNHS), a public high school in Macabari, Barcelona, Sorsogon. Brigada Eskwela, the National Schools Maintenance Week in the Philippines, relies on community involvement and volunteerism to prepare public schools for the academic year. CFFNHS has been recognized for its exemplary implementation of Brigada Eskwela, which encompasses strategic planning, dynamic implementation, and thorough evaluation. This study identifies key practices such as community engagement, comprehensive needs assessments, collaborative team formation, strategic partnerships, and continuous evaluation. A one-day seminar was developed and implemented to sustain these best practices, highlighting the importance of ongoing stakeholder engagement, training, and capacity building. The findings suggest that effective communication, innovative approaches, and a commitment to continuous improvement drive the success of Brigada Eskwela at CFFNHS. Recommendations for sustaining these practices include regular seminars, strengthened partnerships, constant improvement mechanisms, and broader community engagement. These insights provide a valuable framework for other schools aiming to enhance their Brigada Eskwela initiatives.

Keywords— Brigada Eskwela, community involvement, public school maintenance, volunteerism

I. INTRODUCTION

Creating a conducive learning environment in secondary schools is crucial for student development and well-being. The physical state of educational facilities significantly impacts the quality of education, influencing both teaching and learning experiences. Studies have demonstrated a direct link between the condition of school facilities and students' academic performance. According to Schneider (2002), students in well-maintained and adequately equipped classrooms tend to achieve higher test scores and exhibit better attendance rates. Uline and Tschannen-Moran (2008) found that students in schools with better physical conditions performed significantly better on standardized tests than their peers in poorly maintained schools.

The quality of infrastructure, such as proper lighting, ventilation, and furniture, plays a significant role in enhancing students' cognitive functions and reducing distractions. Earthman (2002) emphasizes that classrooms with sufficient natural light and appropriate acoustics contribute to improved reading comprehension and mathematical skills. Moreover, modern and well-maintained facilities often incorporate technology and resources that enrich the learning experience, making lessons more interactive and engaging for students.

Ensuring that all students have access to a conducive learning environment is also a matter of educational equity. Schools in underprivileged areas often suffer from neglect and underfunding, resulting in dilapidated facilities that hinder students' educational opportunities. Addressing this disparity by investing in the refurbishment and maintenance of school infrastructure is crucial for providing equal educational opportunities for all students, regardless of their socio-economic background (The World Bank, 2019).

Well-maintained schools also serve as community hubs, fostering greater community engagement and support for education. According to Durán-Narucki (2019), aesthetically pleasing and functional schools encourage parental and community involvement, which is associated with improved student outcomes. Community members are more likely to take pride in and contribute to the upkeep of well-maintained schools, creating a positive feedback loop that benefits the entire educational ecosystem.

The significance of initiatives like Brigada Eskwela lies not only in their immediate impact on school infrastructure but also in their broader implications for community building and civic engagement. Digo et al. (2023) conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of Brigada Eskwela implementation in Philippine public

schools, identifying strengths like leadership and stakeholder support, weaknesses such as resource inadequacy and communication gaps, and opportunities like community responsiveness. They recommended improved resource allocation and communication strategies for sustainability. While their study offers insights into nationwide implementation, the current study focuses on CFFNHS, aiming to enhance local Brigada Eskwela initiatives and sustainability. Some secondary schools have been recognized for their exemplary implementation of Brigada Eskwela, attributed to strategic planning, effective stakeholder engagement, and innovative resource mobilization (Garcia, 2021). However, in CFFNHS, sustaining best practices remains a challenge, necessitating continuous improvement and adaptation. This study aims to identify and document the best practices of Brigada Eskwela at CFFNHS, develop an intervention to sustain these practices, and evaluate their effectiveness, providing a framework for other schools to replicate and adapt.

II. OBJECTIVES

This study generally aimed to identify and document the best practices of Brigada Eskwela at Celso F. Falcotelo National High School (CFFNHS) and to develop and evaluate an intervention aimed at sustaining these best practices. Specifically, this study aimed to:

1. Identify and describe the best practices of Celso F. Falcotelo National High School in Brigada Eskwela.
2. Develop an intervention aimed at sustaining the identified best practices of Brigada Eskwela at CFFNHS.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the developed intervention in sustaining Brigada Eskwela best practices.

III. METHODOLOGY

This qualitative case study employed various data collection methods, including focus group discussions, interviews, and a one-day seminar. Participants included the School Brigada Eskwela Coordinator, the School Head, and stakeholders from the community, such as members of the School Governance Councils. Thematic coding and qualitative analysis were used to analyze the collected data. The study covered the school years 2019-2020 to 2022-2023, focusing on the planning, implementation, and evaluation phases of Brigada Eskwela at CFFNHS.

This study described Brigada Eskwela's best practices at Celso F. Falcotelo National High School (CFFNHS) through focus group discussions and a one-day seminar during the School Years 2019-2020 to 2022-2023. Employing a qualitative case study design, it provided an in-depth examination of the school's practices within a real-life context, as detailed by MSED (2024). This approach is particularly effective for exploring unique phenomena and illustrating theoretical concepts in a specific setting.

Participants included key stakeholders from CFFNHS, purposefully selected to provide diverse perspectives on Brigada Eskwela. This group comprised one male BE Coordinator, two male teachers, 13 female teachers, one male School Head, and various members of the School Governance Council (SGC), including community representatives such as the Barangay Captain and the SPTA president. Their involvement ensured a comprehensive understanding of the best practices and the effectiveness of interventions.

Data were collected using a three-part interview guide, which facilitated a thorough exploration of the sustainability of Brigada Eskwela practices at CFFNHS. Semi-structured interview guides allowed for in-depth discussions with school heads, teachers, and external stakeholders during focus group discussions and individual interviews. This flexible format enabled participants to share detailed insights and personal experiences regarding the program's best practices during the planning, implementation, and evaluation phases.

The researcher organized and conducted focus group discussions and interviews to gather data. On February 22, 2024, an FGD was held at CFFNHS, involving school personnel and external stakeholders, including the SGC. This session aimed to identify the school's best practices in Brigada Eskwela. Subsequently, interviews were conducted to explore existing interventions and gather data on sustaining these practices. A final interview session was held on March 21, 2024, to assess the effectiveness of a one-day seminar intervention, focusing on the experiences of school personnel involved.

Data analysis involved transcribing all recorded FGD and interview data verbatim to ensure accuracy. The transcriptions were then imported into NVivo software for organization, coding, and thematic analysis. The

researcher identified recurring patterns and themes, generating initial codes based on data content. A process of constant comparison refined these codes into a comprehensive framework, capturing the nuances of Brigada Eskwela's best practices at CFFNHS.

The researcher synthesized the identified themes and sub-themes into a coherent narrative, supported by illustrative quotes from the data. This synthesis was interpreted in light of the research objectives and theoretical frameworks, drawing connections between themes and offering meaningful insights into the sustainability of Brigada Eskwela's best practices. Detailed memos and notes documented analytical insights, ensuring transparency and rigor in the analysis. The study's findings were then discussed to describe the best practices and propose interventions for sustaining Brigada Eskwela at CFFNHS.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, data were analyzed and interpreted. The data discussion was structured according to the study's specific objectives, and the data were treated objectively throughout the study.

Best Practices of Celso F. Falcotelo National High School in Brigada Eskwela

The Celso F. Falcotelo National High School (CFFNHS) has developed several best practices for Brigada Eskwela, effectively integrating strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and rigorous evaluation to ensure the success and sustainability of its initiatives. During the planning phase, one of the key best practices identified was the strategic mobilization of resources through extensive stakeholder engagement. This involved conducting house-to-house visits to encourage participation and support from the community. According to one participant, "Our house-to-house visits allowed us to directly communicate with parents and community members, which significantly increased their involvement" (Informant 20).

Another critical aspect of the planning phase was a comprehensive needs assessment. This process prioritized issues identified within the community, ensuring that the most pressing needs were addressed. Moreover, projects were selected based on themes and criteria from central and regional offices, aligning local efforts with broader educational goals (Department of Education, 2020). This strategic alignment was

instrumental in guiding the school's initiatives effectively.

During the implementation phase, the focus was on maximizing stakeholder participation and managing resources efficiently. Engaging various stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and community members, was a hallmark of this phase. One teacher noted, "The sense of community and shared responsibility was palpable during our implementation activities. Everyone had a role to play" (Informant 7). This collective effort engendered a sense of unity and collaboration, which was crucial for the success of Brigada Eskwela initiatives.

In the evaluation phase, CFFNHS prioritized reliable and consistent assessments to ensure that the projects' effectiveness was accurately measured. The emphasis was on achieving tangible results, such as visible improvements in school facilities and the learning environment. As one community member observed, "Seeing the actual improvements in our school's infrastructure motivated more people to get involved" (Informant 12).

Developing an Intervention to Sustain Best Practices

To sustain these identified best practices, a targeted intervention was developed in the form of a one-day seminar. This seminar, held on March 21, 2024, focused on strategic planning, effective implementation strategies, and sustaining best practices through rigorous evaluation. The seminar content was meticulously crafted to address the specific needs of the stakeholders, enhancing their capacity to contribute effectively to Brigada Eskwela.

The seminar included expert-led discussions on strategic planning, emphasizing the importance of stakeholder engagement and addressing immediate community needs through meaningful projects. Interactive workshops allowed participants to practice efficient resource management and implementation strategies. According to one attendee, "The workshops were particularly helpful in teaching us how to allocate resources and maximize participation" (Informant 4).

Moreover, the seminar highlighted the importance of consistent and reliable evaluation processes. New stakeholders were engaged in these processes to ensure that the best practices were continuously upheld. A school administrator commented, "Involving new

stakeholders in our evaluation process brought fresh perspectives and renewed our commitment to sustaining our initiatives" (Informant 5).

Effectiveness of the Developed Intervention

Feedback from participants evaluated the effectiveness of the developed intervention. The seminar was widely regarded as highly beneficial, significantly increasing participants' awareness of their roles and the importance of stakeholder involvement in Brigada Eskwela. Participants reported an enhanced understanding of strategic planning, implementation, and evaluation skills. One participant shared, "The seminar gave me a clearer understanding of my role and how I can contribute to our school's Brigada Eskwela efforts" (Informant 6).

The intervention also promoted sustained engagement and collaboration among stakeholders, which is crucial for the long-term success of Brigada Eskwela initiatives. This is consistent with findings from previous studies, which emphasize the importance of stakeholder engagement in educational programs (Gertler et al., 2008). The seminar provided a platform for continuous learning and collaboration, ensuring that the best practices identified at CFFNHS are maintained and improved upon.

Brigada Eskwela's best practices at CFFNHS were effectively identified, sustained through targeted intervention, and evaluated through participant feedback. Strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and consistent evaluation processes have been crucial in ensuring the success and sustainability of these initiatives.

The findings align with existing literature on the critical role of community involvement in educational programs (Garcia, 2021; Mandolado & Ancho, 2023; Nieva & Lim, 2023; Tentativa & Aconga, 2021). The study demonstrates that well-planned and executed interventions can significantly enhance the sustainability of educational initiatives, ensuring continued community support and tangible improvements in school facilities and learning environments.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study successfully identified and described the best practices of Celso F. Falcotelo National High School (CFFNHS) in the implementation of Brigada Eskwela,

highlighting the importance of strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and rigorous evaluation. The planning phase was marked by comprehensive needs assessments and strategic alignment with broader educational goals, ensuring that initiatives were both relevant and impactful. The implementation phase demonstrated the power of community collaboration and efficient resource management, while the evaluation phase underscored the need for reliable assessments to track progress and outcomes.

The development and execution of a targeted intervention, a one-day seminar, effectively addressed the sustainability of these best practices. The seminar enhanced participants' understanding and skills in planning, implementation, and evaluation, fostering a renewed commitment to Brigada Eskwela initiatives. Feedback from participants confirmed the seminar's success in increasing awareness, improving skills, and sustaining stakeholder engagement.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

The school may consider strengthening its stakeholder engagement. Continuous efforts should be made to engage a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including parents, local businesses, and community organizations.

The CFFNHS may institutionalize best practices. The best practices identified in this study should be institutionalized within the school's operational framework. This includes formalizing procedures for needs assessment, strategic planning, and evaluation to ensure these practices are consistently applied.

The training program may be expanded. Similar to the one-day seminar conducted in this study, ongoing training programs should be developed to enhance the skills and knowledge of stakeholders. These programs should cover various aspects of Brigada Eskwela, including project management, resource allocation, and community mobilization.

Schools should seek sustainable funding sources to ensure the longevity of Brigada Eskwela initiatives. This can involve partnerships with local businesses, grants from non-governmental organizations, and support from government agencies.

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