

PRESS RELEASE**Brigada Eskwela awardees, partners urged to join efforts for quality education**

PASAY CITY, December 2, 2019 - Brigada Eskwela will take even more significant role in nurturing learners as the Department of Education (DepEd) encouraged educational leaders, administrators, teachers, coordinators, and partners on Thursday to also support its effort towards attaining quality education.

Representing Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones in the 2019 Brigada Eskwela Best Implementing Schools Awards at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC), Undersecretary Nepomuceno Malaluan said the 'bayanihan' program will be important in DepEd's shift of focus from access to quality education.

"*Yung ating pagtulong sa DepEd at sa mga paaralan natin* in the past mainly responded to the need for more resources to make our basic education accessible to all our learners," Usec. Malaluan said in front of more than 500 Brigada Eskwela awardees from 17 regions nationwide.

"But this time, the help that we need will even deepen as the Department shifts the focus from access to quality education," he emphasized.

Malaluan shared that Sec. Briones' plan to address the challenge of quality in basic education stemmed from the country already producing major gains in terms of access to education.

Currently, there are approximately 61,000 schools – 47,000 of which are public-- and 27.2 million learners from kindergarten to Grade 12.

“The remaining access gaps are being bridged through the Last Mile Schools program but overall, the biggest challenge of basic education right now is in the area of quality,” Malaluan said.

Growing numbers

Anchored on the theme: “*Matatag na Bayan para sa Maunlad na Paaralan*”, the 2019 Brigada Eskwela Best Implementing Schools Awards recognized more than 200 elementary and secondary schools across 17 regions at the PICC for their continued support to the program on its 16th year.

These schools were pivotal in Brigada Eskwela’s success for school year 2019-2020. The program was able to generate approximately 7.3-billion-peso worth of resources —almost doubled from last year, and encouraged around 24 million volunteers nationwide.

Undersecretary for Legislative Affairs, External Partnerships and School Sports Tonisito Umali Esq., who oversees the Brigada Eskwela program, clarified that the Awards is not a competition, but a recognition of the schools’ exemplary implementation of the program.

“*Ngayong mayroon po tayong napakalawak at napakatagumpay na Brigada Eskwela, itong ating ginagawa ay pinaparangalan ang mga schools na nakakuha ng pinakamaraming volunteers at nakalikom ng mga donated items, at nagkaroon ng mga makabuluhang program,*” Umali concluded.

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