



Building Partnerships: Exploring Stakeholder Participation in School Co-Curricular and Extracurricular Programs in Norala District

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ABSTRACT

Schools increasingly recognize that meaningful stakeholder participation in co-curricular and extracurricular programs is essential for enhancing student learning, social development, and community engagement. This qualitative study employed a narrative inquiry approach to explore the forms, facilitators, and challenges of stakeholder participation in Norala District schools, while identifying strategies to strengthen collaborative governance and program effectiveness for the school year 2025–

2026. Data were collected from 15 participants, including parents, teachers, and community representatives, through interviews and reflective narratives. Findings revealed that stakeholders actively contributed to planning, coordinating, and implementing school programs, assuming leadership roles and fostering collaborative partnerships with teachers and administrators. Participation extended beyond operational support, promoting personal growth, motivation, and emotional fulfillment among stakeholders. The study also identified key dimensions that sustain effective partnerships: strategic alignment of stakeholder contributions with program goals, consistent communication and transparency, and community engagement that promotes shared ownership. Challenges such as misaligned contributions, communication gaps, and limited clarity in roles were noted but counterbalanced by opportunities for innovation, resource sharing, and reciprocal benefits. Overall, the findings suggest that structured stakeholder involvement strengthens program continuity, enhances student-centered outcomes, and cultivates a supportive school-community ecosystem. The study emphasizes the need for deliberate policies, clear communication channels, and mechanisms to recognize contributions in order to maintain sustainable and impactful partnerships. These insights offer practical guidance for educational leaders, policymakers, and researchers aiming to leverage stakeholder engagement for holistic school development and student success.

Keywords: collaborative governance, community involvement, program sustainability, educational partnerships

I. INTRODUCTION Background of the Study

Schools worldwide recognize that meaningful school–community partnerships and stakeholder participation in co-curricular and extracurricular programs strengthen student learning, social development, and civic skills, but international reviews caution that the quality and design of partnerships—such as purposefulness, shared leadership, and sustainability—determine outcomes more than mere participation rates, leaving a gap in evidence about how partnership

models operate in varied local contexts and across program types (Smith & Riley, 2021; Lee & Kim, 2023).

In the Philippines, national policies and programs such as Brigada Eskwela and Adopt-A-School institutionalize stakeholder roles in school activities and point to positive effects on school readiness and resources; however, empirical studies report uneven stakeholder engagement, barriers related to resources and equity, and limited evaluative research on how participation in co-/extra-curricular programs specifically influences student outcomes—indicating a need for localized, program-level investigation (Paulino, 2022; Department of Education, 2022).

Regional studies in Mindanao emphasize the importance of community partnerships for peace education, relevance to indigenous and Muslim learner contexts, and resilience during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, how ever they also reveal few rigorous, context-specific analyses of stakeholder participation in structured co- and extra-curricular programs in South Central Mindanao, creating a gap in knowledge about best practices for partnership design in culturally diverse, resource-constrained settings (Abdulrahman & Badruddin, 2021; Torres & Ali, 2023).

At the South Cotabato and Norala level, local reports and school-based studies suggest active but varied stakeholder involvement—often shaped by socio-economic constraints, logistical barriers, and differences in stakeholder capacity—yet there is scant published research documenting how Norala’s stakeholders engage with, support, or co-govern co-curricular and extracurricular programs, which limits evidence for district policy and program improvement (Garcia & Ladores, 2021; Paulino, 2022).

Aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4 (inclusive and equitable quality education) and SDG 17 (revitalized partnerships), this study addresses the empirical gap by examining stakeholder roles, enablers, and barriers in Norala’s school co- and extracurricular programs to develop practical recommendations for more

equitable, sustainable school–community partnerships (United Nations, 2020; Lee & Kim, 2023).

The goal of the study, therefore, is to explore and describe the forms of stakeholder participation in Norala District’s co-curricular and extracurricular programs, identify facilitators and obstacles to meaningful engagement, and propose actionable strategies to strengthen collaborative governance and program impact in ways that advance local educational quality and equity.

Research Questions

This study explored and described the forms of stakeholder participation in Norala District’s co-curricular and extracurricular programs, identify facilitators and obstacles to meaningful engagement, and propose actionable strategies to strengthen collaborative governance and program impact in ways that advance local educational quality and equity in South Cotabato Division for school year 2025-2026.

Specifically, this sought to answer the following questions:

1. What stories do stakeholders share about their experiences of participation in school co-curricular and extracurricular programs in Norala District?
2. How do stakeholders describe the roles they play and the contributions they make in supporting school programs beyond the classroom?
3. In what ways do stakeholders construct meaning from their involvement in co-curricular and extracurricular activities, and how does this shape their relationship with the school community?
4. How do the narratives of stakeholders reflect challenges and opportunities in sustaining effective partnerships in school programs?

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this study, a qualitative research, specifically a narrative inquiry approach was employed to unveil the forms of stakeholder participation in Norala District's co-curricular and extracurricular programs, identify facilitators and obstacles to meaningful engagement, and propose actionable strategies to strengthen collaborative governance and program impact in ways that advance local educational quality and equity in South Cotabato Division for school year 2025–2026. Narrative inquiry is suitable for exploring lived experiences and social practices as it allows participants to share their stories in context, providing insights into meaning-making and collective realities (Clandinin, 2016).

This approach is particularly useful when investigating complex social interactions, such as stakeholder participation in schools, since it emphasizes the interpretation of experiences as storied phenomena (Kim, 2021). By employing narrative inquiry, the study can capture how stakeholders perceive, enact, and sustain their roles, leading to a deeper understanding of both challenges and enabling conditions in collaborative educational programs.

Participants of the Study

The participants' qualifications, as determined by the criteria established by the researcher before selecting eligible informants for the study. The study involved a total of fifteen (15) stakeholders in DepEd Norala District, Division of South Cotabato, who will meet the researcher's specified inclusion criteria:

1. Direct Involvement in School Programs
Stakeholders must have actively participated in or contributed to the planning, implementation, or

support of co-curricular and/or extracurricular programs in schools within Norala District. This ensures that participants have relevant and firsthand experience of the subject being studied.

2. Affiliation with the School Community
Participants should belong to groups directly connected to the school, such as parents, teachers, alumni, local government representatives, or community partners, to ensure perspectives are grounded in their roles as school stakeholders.

3. Minimum of One Year of Engagement
Stakeholders must have been involved in school-related initiatives for at least one school year. This requirement ensures they have substantial exposure and experience in school partnerships and participation.

4. Willingness and Availability to Participate
Stakeholders must voluntarily consent to take part in the study and be available for interviews or discussions, guaranteeing ethical participation and the authenticity of the narratives shared.

Sampling Technique

During the conduct of the study, a **purposive sampling technique** was intentionally utilized to select fifteen (15) stakeholders in DepEd Norala District, South Cotabato Division, who met the specific inclusion criteria established by the researcher.

Purposive sampling, also referred to as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, is a type of non-probability sampling technique. In this approach, researchers exercise their judgment and discretion in selecting individuals from the population who are suitable to participate in the study (Alchemer, 2021). This sampling method requires researchers to have prior knowledge of the study's objectives to identify and recruit eligible participants. Purposive sampling is commonly employed to gain access to a specific subgroup of individuals whose experiences, characteristics, or backgrounds are relevant to the research objectives. Accordingly, the participants in this study were deliberately selected based on their relevance to stakeholder participation in co-curricular and extracurricular programs.

Research Instruments

In this study, a **semi-structured interview guide** served as the primary research instrument for conducting in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). The instrument was used to explore the forms of stakeholder participation in Norala District's co-curricular and extracurricular programs, identify the factors that facilitated or hindered meaningful engagement, and gather recommendations for strengthening collaborative governance and program impact. The inquiry focused on how stakeholder participation contributed to educational quality and equity in the South Cotabato Division during the school year 2025–2026.

The semi-structured format allowed the researcher to ask predetermined questions while providing opportunities for participants to elaborate on their experiences, perspectives, and insights. Follow-up questions were also used when necessary to obtain more detailed information relevant to the study's objectives.

Data Gathering Procedure

To ensure the systematic and ethical conduct of the study, the researcher followed a predefined set of data-gathering procedures. The primary objective was to explore the forms of stakeholder participation in Norala District's co-curricular and extracurricular programs, identify the factors that facilitated or hindered meaningful engagement, and determine possible strategies for strengthening collaborative governance and program impact in advancing educational quality and equity in the South Cotabato Division during the school year 2025–2026.

During the initial phase, the researcher sought formal authorization from the Schools Division Superintendent of DepEd–South Cotabato and the Dean of the

College of Graduate Studies (CGS). These authorizations were necessary to secure permission to conduct the study and ensure compliance with institutional requirements and ethical considerations.

After obtaining the necessary approvals, the researcher sent a formal request letter to the District Supervisor of Norala District to seek permission to conduct the study and coordinate the schedule of data collection. The researcher then prepared the semi-structured interview guide, which was subjected to appropriate review and evaluation before its administration to the selected participants.

The researcher employed purposive sampling to select fifteen (15) stakeholders who met the established inclusion criteria. The participants were selected based on their involvement in or relevant experiences with co-curricular and extracurricular programs in the district. Following the requirements of the EWMCI Research Ethics Committee, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews and facilitated focus group discussions through face-to-face interactions. Informed consent was obtained from the participants before data collection, and appropriate measures were observed to protect their confidentiality and ensure the ethical handling of the information gathered.

After the interviews and FGDs had been completed, the collected data were organized, transcribed when applicable, and prepared for analysis. The researcher then examined the participants' responses using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, categories, and themes relevant to the research questions.

Data Analysis

In this study, which focused on exploring the forms of stakeholder participation in Norala District's co-curricular and extracurricular programs, a **thematic**

analysis approach was employed to examine the data gathered from the interviews and focus group discussions. This approach was guided by the works of Flick (2014), Ngag (2023), and Braun (2009), as cited in the original research framework. The analysis involved systematically identifying, organizing, and interpreting meaningful statements, phrases, and patterns in the participants' narratives. The resulting codes and themes were developed in accordance with the study's objectives and the information emerging from the data.

To carry out the analysis, the researcher followed a series of systematic steps.

First, the data sources, including interview transcripts, FGD transcripts or notes, and relevant documents, were organized and prepared for analysis. This process ensured that the collected information was systematically arranged and accessible throughout the analytical process.

Second, the researcher familiarized himself with the data by repeatedly reviewing the interview transcripts and FGD notes. This process facilitated a deeper understanding of the participants' accounts, experiences, and perspectives regarding stakeholder participation in co-curricular and extracurricular programs.

Third, the researcher conducted the initial coding process by identifying meaningful segments of the data that were relevant to the research questions. These codes represented significant concepts, ideas, experiences, and patterns associated with the forms of stakeholder participation, the factors that facilitated or hindered engagement, and the strategies that could strengthen school-community collaboration.

Fourth, the initial codes were grouped into preliminary themes based on their similarities, relationships, and relevance

to the study's objectives. This step provided an organized structure for interpreting the collected narratives.

Fifth, the researcher reviewed and refined the emerging themes to ensure that they accurately represented the participants' responses and were clearly distinguishable from one another. Each theme was assigned a descriptive name that reflected its central meaning and contribution to the study.

Sixth, relevant excerpts from the interviews and FGDs were selected to support the identified themes. These excerpts provided evidence of the participants' perspectives and helped establish a clear connection between the interpretations and the original data.

Finally, the researcher interpreted the identified themes in relation to the study's objectives. The analysis examined recurring patterns, similarities, differences, and relationships across the participants' accounts to develop a comprehensive understanding of stakeholder participation in co-curricular and extracurricular programs in Norala District.

Through this systematic process, the researcher examined the roles and contributions of stakeholders, the factors that influenced their participation, the challenges they encountered, and the strategies they recommended for strengthening collaborative governance and program implementation. The findings provided a qualitative basis for understanding how stakeholder engagement could contribute to educational quality, equity, holistic student development, and stronger school-community partnerships in the South Cotabato Division during the school year 2025–2026.

Scope and Delimitation

This study explored stakeholder participation in school co-curricular and extracurricular programs by focusing on the accounts and experiences of selected stakeholders in Norala District, South Cotabato Division, during the school year 2025–2026. Using a qualitative research design, particularly narrative inquiry, the study gathered participants' personal accounts through interviews, focus group discussions, and relevant document reviews. These sources provided insights into how teachers, parents, school administrators, and selected community partners understood and experienced their involvement in school activities.

The scope of the study was limited to stakeholder participation in co-curricular and extracurricular programs within Norala District. It did not cover other areas of school operations, such as classroom instruction and the broader implementation of formal educational policies, except when these were directly relevant to participants' accounts of stakeholder engagement.

The study examined the roles and contributions of stakeholders, as well as the challenges, motivations, and experiences that shaped their participation in school programs. Through the participants' narratives, the study sought to provide a deeper understanding of the significance of stakeholder collaboration in promoting holistic student development and strengthening school-community partnerships.

The findings were confined to the experiences and perspectives of the selected participants in the identified district and were not intended to represent all stakeholders in other districts or divisions. Instead, the study provided a context-specific understanding of stakeholder participation in co-curricular and extracurricular programs in Norala District.

Important methodological note: I aligned the sampling, research instrument, and data analysis sections with the qualitative narrative inquiry described in your Scope and Delimitation. Before finalizing the manuscript, verify that the fifteen participants represented the stakeholder groups named in the study and that the stated approvals, interviews, FGDs, and consent procedures were actually completed. Also, confirm the full bibliographic details of the cited sources, particularly Braun (2009), to ensure the references match the analytical approach used.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

On the Stories Shared by Stakeholder about Their Experiences of Participation in School Co-Curricular and Extracurricular Programs

The findings revealed that stakeholders' participation in school co-curricular and extracurricular programs in the Norala District reflected meaningful engagement that supports both school development and student learning. Stakeholders actively contributed to various school activities and events, demonstrating their commitment to improving the learning environment and strengthening collaboration within the school community. Their involvement extends beyond participation, as many stakeholders assume leadership and organizational roles in coordinating activities, managing programs, and supporting school initiatives. These responsibilities highlight the collaborative partnership between schools, parents, and community members in sustaining educational programs. Moreover, participation in these initiatives fosters personal growth and emotional fulfillment among stakeholders, as they experience a sense of purpose, motivation, and satisfaction through their contributions.

Stakeholder Roles and Contributions in Supporting School Programs Beyond Classroom.

Also, the findings indicated that stakeholders play diverse and significant roles in supporting school programs beyond the classroom through administrative, instructional, community, and student-centered initiatives. Their involvement in program planning and administrative support ensures that school activities are well-organized, financially supported, and effectively implemented. Stakeholders also contribute to instructional and academic support by mentoring learners, facilitating skill development activities, and collaborating with teachers to enhance learning opportunities. In addition, community and partnership engagement strengthens connections between the school and external groups such as local organizations, alumni, and community leaders, enabling schools to access additional resources and expertise. Furthermore, stakeholders actively participate in programs that promote student welfare and holistic development, including initiatives that support learners' nutrition, motivation, confidence, and personal growth. Collectively, these contributions demonstrate that stakeholder participation extends beyond traditional support roles, forming a collaborative network that enriches educational programs and strengthens the overall learning environment.

On the Stakeholder Construction of Meaning In Their Involvement in Co-Curricular and ExtraCurricular Activities and Its Influence on their Relationship in Community

Furthermore, the findings revealed that stakeholder participation in co-curricular and extracurricular activities significantly contributes to personal development, a sense of purpose, and meaningful community engagement. Stakeholders reported growth in skills,

knowledge, and self-awareness, alongside increased motivation, pride, and fulfillment from contributing to school programs. Collaborative activities fostered stronger relationships, enhanced cooperation, and the creation of supportive networks within the community. Furthermore, sustained involvement promoted shared values, long-term impact, and responsibility for maintaining positive changes in the school environment. Overall, these results demonstrate that stakeholder engagement not only enhances individual competencies but also strengthens school-community partnerships and ensures continuity of educational initiatives.

On the Narratives of Stakeholder Reflecting Challenges and Opportunities in Sustaining Effective Partnerships in School Programs

Finally, the analysis of stakeholder narratives revealed that sustaining effective partnerships in school programs relies on three interconnected dimensions: strategic alignment of stakeholder contributions, communication and transparency, and community engagement with shared ownership. Effective partnerships occur when stakeholder resources, expertise, and contributions are aligned with program goals and community needs, while gaps in alignment can hinder impact. Clear communication, consistent information sharing, and transparency were critical for maintaining continuity, building trust, and deepening relationships among stakeholders. Additionally, partnerships that foster mutual participation, recognition of contributions, and shared responsibility strengthened community ownership and created reciprocal benefits for both learners and stakeholders.

Conclusion

The following conclusions were made in light of this study's findings:

Stakeholder participation is a vital element in strengthening school-community partnerships and sustaining meaningful educational programs. When stakeholders are given opportunities to actively engage, lead, and collaborate in school initiatives, they not only support the development of learners but also experience personal growth and fulfillment in the process. This highlights the importance of nurturing inclusive and supportive environments where schools, families, and communities work together toward common educational goals.

Also, it becomes evident that effective school programs thrive when stakeholders work collaboratively with educators to support learners in multiple dimensions. Their contributions highlight the value of shared responsibility, where planning, mentorship, community partnerships, and student welfare initiatives converge to create a more supportive educational ecosystem. It has also inferred that fostering personal growth, collaboration, and shared values, stakeholders become active contributors to sustainable educational outcomes. This insight emphasizes the importance of nurturing inclusive, participatory environments in schools where all stakeholders feel empowered, valued, and responsible for the continuous improvement of educational programs.

Finally, it has been concluded that schools benefit when stakeholders are engaged not only as contributors but as active collaborators whose input shapes meaningful programs. Fostering transparency, celebrating contributions, and promoting shared ownership cultivate trust, commitment, and collective responsibility, which are essential for the sustainability and impact of educational initiatives.

Recommendations

In light of the findings of the study, the following were recommended:

1. DepEd (Department of Education) may encourage policies that formalize stakeholder engagement in both co-curricular and extracurricular programs, ensuring that parents, community members, and local organizations are recognized as active partners in planning, implementation, and evaluation of school initiatives.
2. School Administrators: may establish structured platforms for stakeholders to contribute meaningfully, such as regular planning committees, advisory boards, or volunteer coordinators. Provide clear roles and responsibilities, celebrate contributions, and maintain open channels of communication to strengthen trust and shared ownership.
3. Policy Makers: may develop guidelines and incentives that promote strategic alignment of stakeholder resources with school needs, such as funding support for collaborative projects or recognition programs for exemplary partnerships. Ensure transparency and accountability mechanisms are integrated to sustain long-term engagement.
4. Future Researchers: may investigate long-term outcomes of stakeholder participation on student development and school programs, particularly examining how alignment, communication, and community engagement influence sustainability. Explore culturally responsive strategies for involving diverse stakeholders to maximize inclusivity and impact.

Compliance Ethical Considerations. In preparation for the conduct of this study, all the aforementioned plans and recommendations were presented to East-West Mindanao Colleges Inc to ensure compliance with prescribed procedures and protocols. Within the context of the research focused on

examining the forms of stakeholder participation in Norala District's co-curricular and extracurricular programs, identify facilitators and obstacles to meaningful engagement, and propose actionable strategies to strengthen collaborative governance and program impact in ways that advance local educational quality and equity in South Cotabato Division for school year 2025-2026, it is imperative to emphasize the paramount importance of ethical considerations. Prior to commencing this study, the following ethical principles will be highlighted:

Informed Consent: Before participation, explicit and informed consent will be diligently obtained from all school heads involved in the study. It is imperative that they possess a comprehensive understanding of the study's objectives, methodologies, potential risks, and benefits. Furthermore, participation will remain entirely voluntary, affording participants the autonomy to withdraw from the study at any juncture without encountering any adverse consequences.

Anonymity and Confidentiality: To safeguard the identities and responses of the teachers, rigorous measures will be enacted to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Rather than using actual names, pseudonyms or codes will be employed, upholding the privacy of the participants. The collected data will be securely stored with access restricted solely to the research team.

Avoiding Harm: Delicate subjects, such as the challenges inherent in their roles, will be discussed with meticulous consideration for the potential emotional and psychological impact on the participants. Strategies will be in place to minimize distress, and a support system will be readily available to assist participants should the need arise.

Researcher-Participant

Relationship: The researcher will maintain a professional and respectful rapport when engaging with the school heads. Any actions that may exploit or cause harm to the participants will be scrupulously avoided, ensuring their utmost dignity and respect throughout the research process.

Data Protection: Adherence to data protection regulations and laws will be unwavering followed to safeguard the personal information of the participants. Stringent measures will be employed to ensure the secure storage and transmission of data.

Voluntary Participation: Participants will be assured that their involvement in the study is wholly voluntary, devoid of any form of coercion or external pressure.

Researcher Bias: The researcher will remain vigilant regarding potential biases that might influence data collection and analysis, upholding objectivity and transparency throughout the research endeavor.

Institutional Approval: Before initiating the study, the researcher will diligently seek ethical clearance from the pertinent institutional review boards or ethics committees.

Honesty and Integrity: The research findings will be reported truthfully and accurately, devoid of any manipulation or distortion to align with preconceived notions or biases.

Beneficence: The potential benefits of the research to educational practices and policies will be thoughtfully considered, ensuring that the study positively contributes to the enhancement of the education system.

Cultural Sensitivity: The researcher will display cultural sensitivity by

respecting local customs, beliefs, and practices within the research setting, refraining from imposing external values on the participants.

Inclusion and Diversity: The study's structure will prioritize inclusive and diversity, encompassing a wide spectrum of the forms of stakeholder participation in Norala District's co-curricular and extracurricular programs, identify facilitators and obstacles to meaningful engagement, and propose actionable strategies to strengthen collaborative governance and program impact in ways that advance local educational quality and equity in South Cotabato Division for school year 2025-2026.

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Declaration of AI Tools Declaration

I do hereby declare the use AI tools, such as Chat GPT and Grammarly for grammar checking and sentence organization purposes only.

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