SCHOOL BULLYING: WHAT IT IS? WHAT IT DOES? WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT?

by:
Reymualdo R. Mantilla, Jr
Teacher III, Pulo Elementary School

Bullying is a widespread phenomenon among young people and it is used to describe as an act of unwanted and aggressive behavior towards other people which may involve a real or perceived power imbalance. Examples of bullying are making threats, attacking someone physically or verbally, spreading rumors or anything that may ruin a person’s image. This usually starts during the school age but can be applied to all ages (Dankutan, 2016).

Bullying in schools disturbs the rights of children and adolescents, including their right to education. There is clear evidence that school bullying has a negative impact on the academic performance, physical and mental health and emotional well-being of those who are victimized. By creating an atmosphere of anxiety, fear and insecurity that is unsuited with learning, it has a negative impact on the wider school environment. Schools often fail to deal with bullying and common measures, such as expelling committers, just transfer the problem in another place (UNESCO, 2017).

It is embodied in Article XV, Section 3 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states that the authorities shall defend the right of children to assistance, including proper care and special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation, and other conditions prejudicial to their development.

Indeed, every child has a right against abuses, rights to live in a harmonious place where free from hazards, and other conditions or circumstances harmful to his holistic development. However, for many children around the world, bullying was a regular part of the school experiences (Children’s Right, 1999). In fact, in the Philippines, 2 out of 10
children per day experiencing being made fun of name calling, and making the child do something he/she doesn’t want to do (Dankutan, 2016).

According to the consolidated report of the Department of Education (DepEd), bullying cases on elementary and High School of both private and public schools on 2014 rose by 21 % or a total of 6,363 cases compare with the 5,236 on 2013. This translates to 31 daily bullying cases (Gullas, 2013).

These cases should be addressed by guidance councilor’s, however, in current Status of Elementary Schools in the Philippines, there is no registered guidance councilor’s who specialized for handling these cases. In return, administrator assigns the teacher who will be served as guidance designate. In a small school that there is no guidance designate teacher adviser will serve as a guidance councilor. The guidance function was perceived as a major responsibility of the classroom teacher.

There are some bullying cases in the school did not address the teachers promptly, most often teachers neglect their duty to address the needs of bullied children. Study revealed that most educators may lack of knowledge and skills to respond bullying. Furthermore, teachers’ perception in their role when faced with situation involving bullying, approximately 50 percent considered themselves to be outsiders or not involved in situations involving bullying. In addition, they believed that they lacked of knowledge and skills to respond in a situation involving bullying (Chatters, 2016) In fact, teachers are not prepared to have a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning if they are not properly informed about how to deal with bullying behaviors (Gleason, 2011).

In response the Department of Education as a second handler of learners in the country, launched different orders, programs, memorandum to address the needs of children and prevent the circumstances properly. As mentioned in the Deped Order No. 40, s. 2012 or also known as Deped Child Protection Policy that one of the Duties and responsibilities of Division Office is to develop strategies to address the risk factors that
Contribute to the commission of acts of abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, and bullying. However, only few prior review have been conducted on school-based intervention to reduce bullying. It is imperative to every school to provide a school based intervention plan that could help to reduce and address the bullying cases in their respective schools. Bullying is not a disease that can easily cure or manage, it takes time to diminish the number of cases. School should always prepare in this kind of challenges and teacher must equipped on how to handle this problem.

References:


Department of Education Order No. 40, series 2012 “Child Protection Policy”