

# Anti – Bullying Programs in Review

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**Abstract**— Bullying was undoubtedly one of the challenging problems faced by schools and even communities worldwide because of its adverse effect to the victim and also to the bully. This study assessed the compliance of the stakeholders of elementary schools of Tabuk City to their roles and responsibilities stipulated in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Anti – Bullying Act of 2013. Also, it presented the anti – bullying programs adopted and crafted by schools and their effectiveness in diminishing bullying incidents in schools. A structured survey questionnaire was utilized to solicit responses to the problems. The recommendations made encourage the collaborative efforts of the Department of Education and stakeholders to prevent and stop bullying in schools.

The administrators, principals, or school heads of the elementary schools in the city have complied with the 11 main responsibilities mandated in implementing the RA 1062. In addressing bullying in schools approaches are classified as preventive and responsive. The schools practiced the inclusion of topics on bullying in the different subject areas. Home visitation is also one of the roles of the school. Therefore, it recommended that there should be establishment of monitoring and evaluation tools to closely monitor the stakeholders on their roles. There should also be formulation of student alliances to empower anti-bullying program. Allocation of budget is also needed and schools may consider going over the mechanics of Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP).

**Keywords**— Anti-bullying Programs, review, Tabuk City, Kalinga.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Children have the right to enjoy life to the fullest and a right to live and learn in a happy and peaceful society. However, how can a society address this right if it is the venue of violence and harm? How could children enjoy living and learning if they are bombarded with fear from being teased, being maltreated, and being out casted? The provision of quality education would be worthless if children experience bullying at school or in his/ her community.

Because of its effect, bullying became one of the most significant challenge faced by schools nowadays (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation). Bullying causes dramatic changes to the victims as well as to the bully. A child who is confident and active could adversely act after suffering from any form of bullying. It is indeed very important for schools to craft anti – bullying policies and for all stakeholders to be well- oriented on the preventive and intervention

programs in order to successfully prevent and address bullying among children.

The programs or policies set by the school are influenced by how they understand bullying (Safe and Supportive School Communities Working Group 2015). The Implementing Rules and Regulation of the RA 10627 (Anti – Bullying Act of 2013) defined bullying as:

*any severe, or repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at another student that has the effect of actually causing or placing the latter in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm or damage to his property; creating a hostile environment at school for the other student; infringing on the rights of another student at school; or materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school; such as, but not limited to, the following: 1. Any unwanted physical contact between the bully and the victim*

*like punching, pushing, shoving, kicking, slapping, tickling, headlocks, inflicting school pranks, teasing, fighting and the use of available objects as weapons; 2. Any act that causes damage to a victim's psyche and/or emotional well-being; 3. Any slanderous statement or accusation that causes the victim undue emotional distress like directing foul language or profanity at the target, name-calling, tormenting and commenting negatively on victim's looks, clothes and body; 4. "Cyber-bullying" or any bullying done through the use of technology or any electronic means. The term shall also include any conduct resulting to harassment, intimidation, or humiliation, through the use of other forms of technology, such as, but not limited to texting, email, instant messaging, chatting, internet, social media, online games, or other platforms or formats as defined in DepED Order No. 40, s. 2012; and 5. Any other form of bullying as may be provided in the school's child protection or anti-bullying policy, consistent with the Act and this IRR.*

As it was defined by the above – cited law, bullying also encompasses 'social bullying' which refers to any deliberate, repetitive and aggressive social behaviour intended to hurt others or to belittle another individual or group and 'gender – based bullying' which refers to any act that humiliates or excludes a person on the basis of perceived or actual sexual orientation and gender identity.

In North Carolina, USA, a study showed that the occurrence of bullying differs according to the type of bullying: 20.8% of students surveyed were involved in physical bullying, 53.6% in verbal bullying, 51.4% in relational bullying, and 13.6% in cyber bullying (Paul R. Smokowski et al, 2013).

In a survey conducted in 2012 at Virginia, USA, 9 % of the 3, 387 grades 6 – 8 students reported that they experienced being bullied at least once a week with verbal bullying as the most usually committed type of bullying (Safe Schools/Healthy Students Albermale/ Charlottesville Project). The American Institute for Research reported that about 28% of students between the ages of 12 – 18 in 2011 have been bullied at school during the said school year and 9% reported having been cyber – bullied. It is showed in the Stop A Bully School Reports from 2011 – 2012 that 41% of the students reported having bullied for months while 11% said that they are being bullied for years.

According to the Kandersteg Declaration Against Bullying in Children and Youth, at around 200 million children and youth in the world are being bullied by their peers (Kidspot.com.au, n.d.).

In the Philippines, DepEd reported that in school year 2012 – 2013, 80% of the 1, 456 child abuse cases involved bullying (Malipot, 2013). This is despite the passing of the RA 10627 and the creation of DepEd's Child Protection Policy. Citing a DepEd report, Cebu Representative Gerald Anthony Gullas Jr. said that a total of 6, 363 bullying cases in public and private elementary and secondary schools were recorded. With the total number of class days (201), this number of recorded cases transpires to 31 incidents of bullying every day (PhilStar.com).

Researches made in 1970s conducted by Dan Olweus, a researcher from Norway, emphasized the characteristics and harmful effects of school bullying. School bullying, when not addressed immediately and carefully, could lead to more serious harm to both bully and victim. The bully are more likely to develop more aggressive actions leading to criminal records while the victim could be traumatized when interventions are not made (Sampson, Rana, 2002).

In this regard, bullying is becoming a barrier to the fulfilment of the roles of the school as an avenue for a child-friendly learning environment and provider of education that caters not only to mental aspect of the students but also to their physical, social, and emotional well – beings.

With the extensive body of researches of the different countries on the nature and effects of bullying, each country have tried to exert efforts to prevent and intervene through the development of anti – bullying programs. Anti – bullying refers to any effort from the government, schools, organizations and/ or individuals aimed at preventing or stopping the act of bullying. This could be in the form of laws, policies, movements, programs and / or projects (*Cheprasov, Artem*).

The literature review conducted by the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation classified the anti – bullying programs into preventive and responsive approaches. Preventive approaches include actions that try to avoid bullying from happening while responsive approaches are taken to solve bullying incidents which have occurred in the school.

The purpose of this research is threefold as it tried to find out the extent of compliance of the elementary schools in the provisions of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Anti- Bullying Act (RA 10627) regarding the intervention programs in addressing bullying in schools and community. Once compliance to these provisions was proven, this research identified the intervention programs set in these

schools and further tested their effectiveness in reducing bullying incidents in schools.

This study was focused on the intervention programs of the elementary schools in Tabuk City in addressing bullying. Specifically, it determined the extent of compliance of the elementary schools in Tabuk City; and identified the prevention and intervention program(s) formulated by the elementary schools of the city to combat bullying.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The study used mixture of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Among the different descriptive design methods, case study was considered to be the most appropriate to extract reliable results. In research studies, it is a most widely used method to investigate a contemporary phenomena within its real life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 1994). Hence, it is the most appropriate method to use in determining the extent of compliance of the elementary schools of the city to the IRR of RA 10627. Qualitative approach was used with regards to the identification of the prevention and intervention programs of the school. The respondents of the study were the guidance counsellor of the eight selected elementary schools situated in

rural and urban barangays of Tabuk City. In the absence of a guidance counsellor, the Child Protection Coordinator of the schools served as respondents of the study.

A survey questionnaire was used to gather necessary data for the completion of the study. The instrument was lifted from the provisions of the IRR of RA 10627. Moreover, the researcher conducted an informal interview to teachers to verify the collected data especially on the prevention and intervention programs established by the school to address the problem on bullying.

To attain the objectives set in this study, needed data were collected through a survey questionnaire backed up an interview. The data collected were tallied for proper presentation. No statistical tool was used to treat the collected data.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. COMPLIANCE OF SCHOOLS TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE ANTI – BULLYING ACT

Figure 1 shows the compliance of the administrators, principals, and school heads of elementary schools in Tabuk City to the mandates stipulated in the IRR of RA 10627.

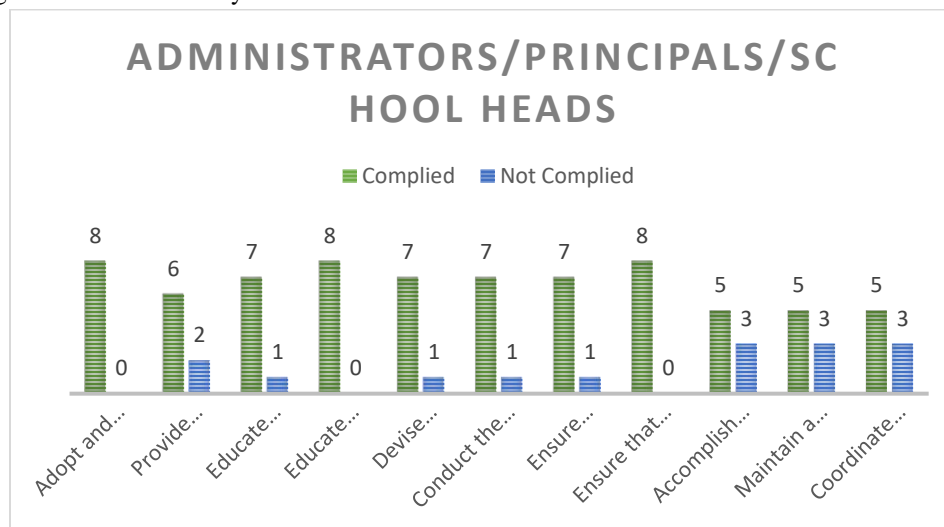


Fig.1: Compliance of Administrators/ principals/ school heads to the mandate of the IRR of RA 10627

As a general perception of the respondents, the administrators, principals, or school heads of the elementary schools in the city have complied with the 11 main responsibilities mandated in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA 10627 in combatting bullying in schools. This implies that school leaders are aware of these

responsibilities and the possible consequences of non – compliance.

Among the provisions, the adoption of school bullying programs, educating the children and their parents about the dynamics of these programs, and ensuring to uphold the rights of all parties involved in the act of bullying during

investigation were highly complied by the school heads. This means that school heads give importance to making the school environment truly a child – friendly zone.

In contrary, the accomplishment of the Intake Sheet prescribed in Annex “B”, whenever there is an incident of bullying, maintain a record of all proceedings related to bullying, and submit reports prescribed in “Annex A,” of DepED Order No. 40, s. 2012, to the Division Office; maintenance of a public record or statistics of incidents of bullying and retaliation; and, coordination with appropriate offices and other agencies or instrumentalities for appropriate assistance and intervention, as required by the circumstances

were not being practiced by some of the school heads in the city. According to the respondents, cases of bullying in the school were recorded individually by their respective advisers. When cases of bullying occurs, the school heads together with the teachers and the parents could settle the situation that’s they don’t seek help from other agencies concerned. To some schools, when bullying occurs in the school and it was being settled, the case was not recorded anymore.

Figure 2 shows the compliance of the teachers and other personnel in the elementary schools of Tabuk City with the mandates of the IRR of RA 10627.

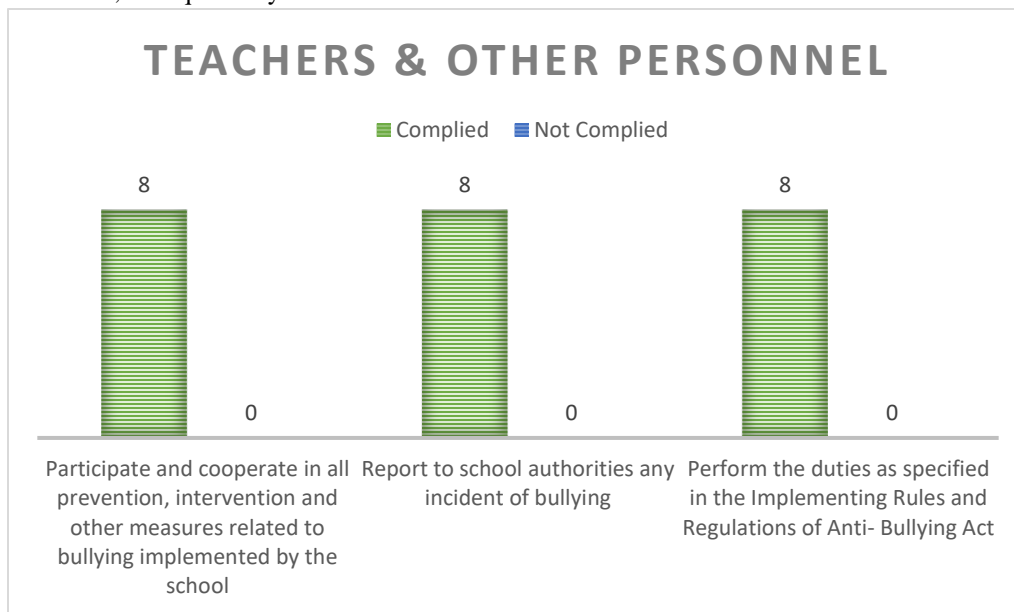


Fig.2: Compliance of the teachers and other personnel to the mandate stipulated in the IRR of RA 10627

It is note – worthy that the teachers and other personnel of the selected elementary schools of the city have fully complied and/ or are religiously complying with their mandated responsibilities as specified in the IRR of the Anti – bullying Act. This could be rooted from the fact that teachers imbibed their role as second parents to the children

hence, everything which concerns the welfare of the children also concerns them.

Figure 3 shows the compliance of the students of the elementary schools in Tabuk City to the mandates stipulated in the IRR of RA 10627.

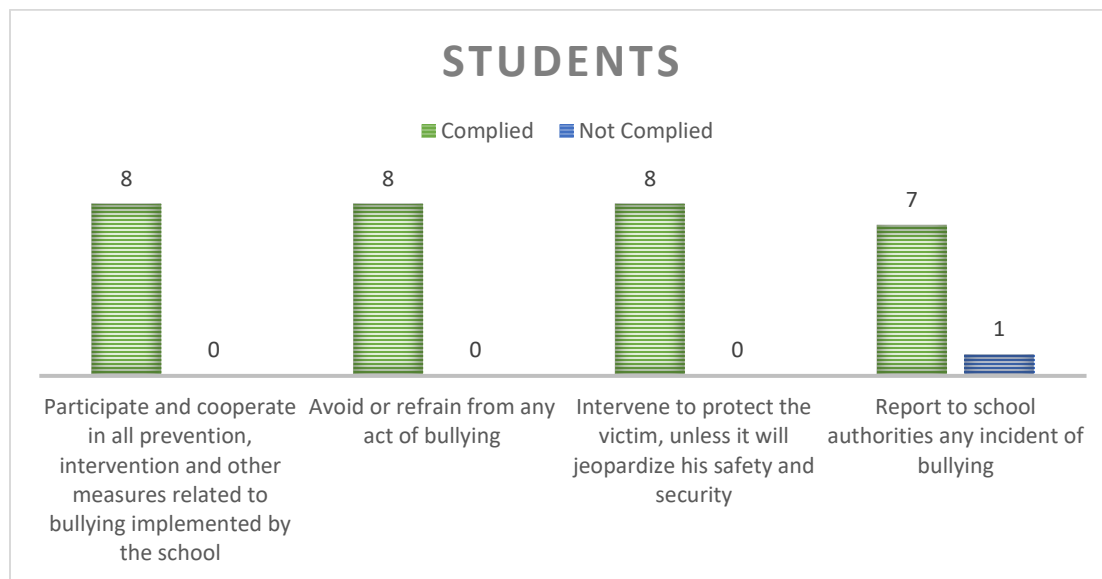


Fig.3: Compliance of the students to the mandate stipulated in the IRR of RA 10627

The study revealed that students as observed by the respondents have complied with the provisions of the Anti – bullying Act. This observation however, is contrary to the fact that students still bully others even when they know about that bullying is not good. This is supported by a statement of one of the students being interviewed informally that her male classmate always bully her even after being reprimanded by the teacher and being taught that what he’s doing could affect the children he is bullying.

Also, the observation of the counsellor/ Child protection coordinator on the compliance of the students to the third

indicator is not true to all the students since one of the interviewed students said that he chose not to intervene when he saw a group bullying someone because of his fear of getting bullied too. Other students as testified, only watched when there is bullying incident in the school.

It is also found out that some students who have witnessed bullying did not report to the authorities. This is due to their fear of being a victim of the act.

Figure 4 shows the compliance of the child protection coordinator of the elementary schools in Tabuk City to the mandates stipulated in the IRR of RA 10627.

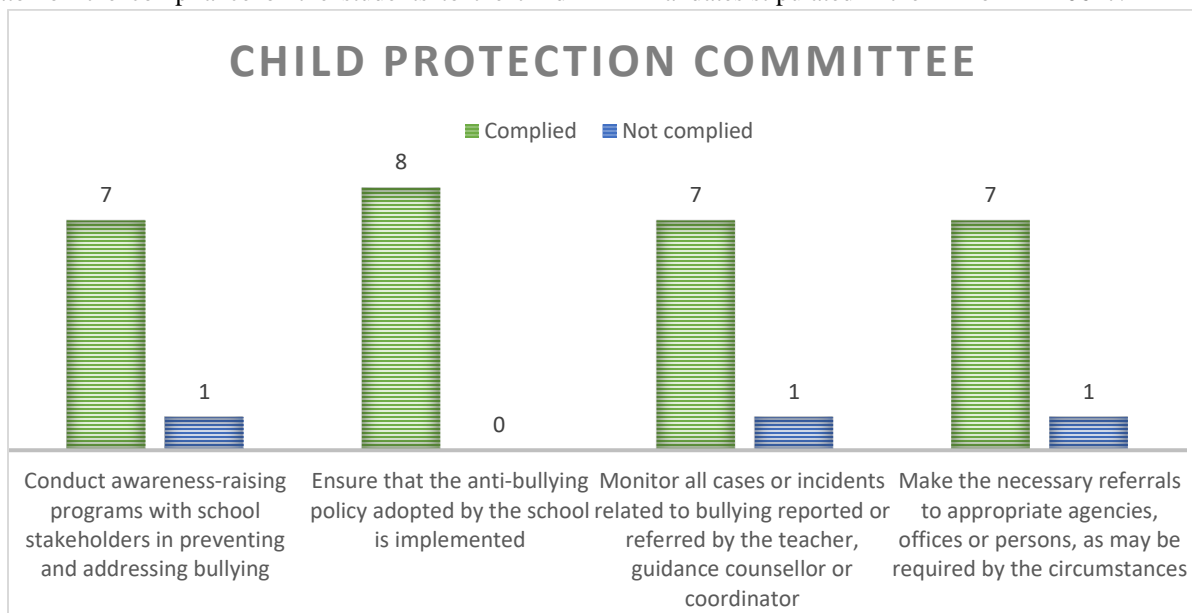


Fig.4: Compliance of the Child Protection Coordinators to the mandate stipulated in the IRR of RA 10627

In response to the alarming bullying statistics recorded and to ensure that cases of bullying are closely monitored in school level, DepEd issued order No. 40, series of 2012 known as the DepEd child Protection Policy which requires all public and private elementary and secondary schools to create their own child protection committees. The figure shows that the child protection committee in the schools have complied with the provisions mandated in the IRR of the Anti – bullying Act. Among the mandated responsibilities, the CPCs of elementary schools in the city have fully complied with their role to ensure that the anti – bullying policy adopted by the school is implemented. The compliance shows that the collaborative effort of the school and community in combatting bullying is evident.

## **B. PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAMS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

In addressing bullying in schools, approaches are classified as preventative and responsive. The first aims to prevent bullying from occurring while the second aims to stop bullying from re – occurring.

### Preventive Approaches of Elementary Schools in Tabuk City

As mandated by the Anti – bullying Act, schools involved in the study crafted, if not, adopted an anti – bullying policy. Said policy commonly consist the dynamics of bullying, the consequences of committing such act, and the different ways of handling bullying cases in the school. This manifests the seriousness of these schools in combatting any form of bullying in the school. In the literature review conducted by the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, the establishment of a school – wide anti – bullying policy is one of the four key strategies for a successful whole – school approach which is one of the preventative anti- bullying approaches discussed. A meta – analysis conducted by Lee, Kim and Kim (2015) found out that establishing anti – bullying policies have greater effect to the bully victimization than those programs which does not include the establishment of the said policies.

Some of the schools involved in the study practice the inclusion of topics on bullying in the different subject areas. The purpose of such strategy is to teach students on the adverse effect of bullying not only to the bullied but also to the bully. Similarly, majority of schools in England used classroom – based anti – bullying content to prevent bullying (Thompsons and Smith's, 2011) and such strategy was described helpful in stopping bullying in Australia (Rigby and Johnson, 2016). This is also one of the strategies of the KiVa Anti – bullying Program of Finland.

Another preventive strategy commonly practiced by elementary schools is the conduct of school symposium on bullying. This is one of the information dissemination techniques of schools to orient students on the “must – know” about bullying. One of the strategy is inviting agencies concerned like the Philippine National Police to lecture on the topics related to bullying. Also, bullying and the punishment of doing such the act are discussed during orientation programs of some schools.

### Responsive Approach of Elementary Schools in Tabuk City

As to the intervention/ responsive approach, home visitation is the most commonly used strategy when bullying occurred. The teacher accompanied by the guidance counsellor or Child Protection coordinator visit the bully and victim for an amiable investigation.

When bullying occurs in the school, one of the intervention strategy done by the school authorities is to have a meeting with the bully, victim, and sometimes with some by- standers. In this way, the bully and the victim are given counselling and for the case to be settled immediately. A letter reporting the incident and asking for help in giving pieces of advice to the involved students will then be forwarded to the parents of the students.

If after the above – cited intervention strategies were done and the bully is still committing such misbehaviour for third or more time, the bully will be subjected to suspension/ expulsion policy. However, this strategy was practiced by only few elementary schools in the city.

## **IV. CONCLUSION**

The determination of the different stakeholders of the schools in addressing bullying in schools is evident through their efforts of complying with their responsibilities as mandated by the Implementing Rules of RA 10627. The students, however, are still hesitant to intervene when bullying is taking place and even afraid to report the incident to their teachers and other school authorities. Hence, not all bullying cases occurring in the school are settled with the teacher and simply continues.

It is also worth – noting that most of the strategies in the anti – bullying programs crafted by schools are more on intervention than prevention.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Establishment of monitoring and evaluation tools to closely monitor and evaluate the compliance of different stakeholders to their roles and responsibilities as provided in



the IRR of RA 10627 is needed. The formulation student alliances (may be called KAMI KONTRA PAMBUBULLY) among schools which shall be led by the Child Protection Coordinator. This group of students shall be trained and empowered to take part in preventing or stopping bullying in school and shall take the lead to inform and empower their fellow students. Allocation of budget for the crafting an anti – bullying software or computer application where teachers, students and other stakeholder could report incidents of bullying. Schools may consider going over the mechanics of Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) of Norway from which they could adopt and contextualize preventive ways in obviate bullying. The higher education institutions offering criminal justice education courses may include anti – bullying seminars and trainings to different schools and even in communities as part of their extension project.

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