BREAK: HALTING THE TREND OF SCHOOL-BASED ABUSE

by:
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Over the years, the world has increasingly become a more dangerous place to live. Threats of wars, terrorism, and discord plague the world, and many fear for their security and safety. Criminals prowl the night while crimes occur in broad daylight. The increasing threat to peace instills fear in many, and every part of society is affected. Most find their haven to be their family and friends or within groups and institutions. For students, the school is considered to be one of the safest places to be.

Schools should provide quality, inclusive, and progressive learning delivered in a safe, secure, and diverse environment. Schools are tasked with developing not only the reading, writing, and arithmetic skills of children, but honing their critical thinking and social and communication skills as well. However, for many children globally, schools serve as the grounds where they experience abuse, bullying, harassment, humiliation, and violence. In a 2019 study conducted by the CDC through their Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 8% of the 13,677 high school student respondents admitted to being involved in physical fights while 7% had been threatened or injured by a weapon within the school grounds. On the other hand, UNICEF revealed that a whopping 150 million students aged 12-18 suffer from school violence and bullying globally, with verbal and social harassment as the most common kinds of abuse. Studies also show that this abuse is not limited to students alone. Over the years, cases of bullying and harassment by students towards their teachers and members of the faculty have been on the rise. Consequently, with the advent of technology, school violence also found its way online through cyberbullying.

In the Philippines, the Republic Act No. 10627, otherwise known as the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013, was established to address and prevent all kinds of school bullying and violence. However, it is proving to be an uphill battle. Now more than ever, efforts should be geared towards preventing these kinds of school violence and providing help and support to the victims. Prevention efforts should begin at the top and involve all education stakeholders. Awareness, understanding and joint efforts by the teachers, administrators, community, and the student themselves will help curve and ultimately halt this trend of school-based abuse. School violence is an issue that is of global concern. After all, we must remember that protecting children is saving our future.

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