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Bullying Experienced among Indigenous People Students of PNU–North Luzon: A Basis for Formulating School Policy

ABSTRACT: Bullying is a major issue in today’s world and is getting increasing attention in the research literature. The school safety, including the prevention of bullying, is a top priority and a key area of academic research. This study endeavors to describe and analyze the bullying experiences of the indigenous people students of PNU (Philippine Normal University)-North Luzon, and to determine their social impact. A descriptive qualitative research was employed. Respondents were determined through the help of the adviser with small group interviews, planned and unplanned, and one on one basis were conducted. Issues on students’ experiences that were positively solved were presented to set the mood of the interview and to elicit very personal data from the respondents. The findings show that the forms of bullying experienced by the IP (Indigenous People) students of PNU-North Luzon Campus, namely: indirect bullying, verbal bullying, psychological bullying, and institutional bullying. The recommendations are the school should create a system wide policy on standardized labeling of sections of the students in the different year levels, not according to particular group of people; and Educational Community should be culture sensitive to any school endeavor.

KEY WORD: Bullying; Indigenous People Student; Experience; School Policy.


KATA KUNCI: Buli; Mahasiswa Pribumi; Pengalaman; Kebijakan Sekolah.

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INTRODUCTION

Bullying all over the world is becoming a primary concern among children, adolescence, and even adults. This problem occurs when a person is subjected, repeatedly, and over time to negative actions from another person or group. This may happen at home, in the school, in the community, or even in the workplace. This even gets wider attention to authorities to control such (Neto, 2005; Shetgiri, 2014; and Wolke & Lereya, 2015).

In the Philippines, RA (Republic Act) No.10627, otherwise known as the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013, defines acts of bullying in schools and direct the schools to adopt policies aimed at addressing bullying. The law prohibits bullying at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related and through the use of technology or an electronic devise that is not owned, leased or used by a school if the act or acts in question create a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringe on the rights of the victim at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school (Cornell & Limber, 2015; Reyes, 2016; and Rivara, 2016).¹

There are three different types of bullies that are common in schools today: physical bullies, verbal bullies, and relational bullies. Physical bullies are just what they sound like physical. These types of bullies tend to hit, kick, punch, shove, or use any other type of physical exertion of energy towards other kid. Verbal bullies are the types of bullies that use harsh words, such as name-calling, insults, racial comments, or comments about another student’s physical appearance in order to degrade their victim. Verbal bullying is the most commonly reported type of bullying. Finally, relational bullies are acts that single out victim from their peer group.

This is mostly done by the bully using verbal threats or spreading undesirable rumors about their victims. While these types of bullying are not necessarily the stereotypical pictures that come to mind when thinking about bullies, they are all very serious and can possibly have some serious detrimental effects on both parties involved (Olweus, 1993; Spriggs et al., 2007; and Wang, Iannotti & Nansel, 2009).

Unfortunately, bullying is an unavoidable part of life, especially for children. It is very frequent and since the beginning of time, it has plagued all over the world. What is the best way to deal with bullying, so that both the bully and the victim can grow from the experience and become better people? Before this question can be answered, it is important to explore every aspect involved with bullying. It is needed to look at everything that bullies do, the way it affects both the victim and the bully, and exactly how much bullying currently occurs in schools (Govender, 2007; Reyes, 2016; and Rios, 2016).

In American schools and in the United Kingdom, bullying is a widespread numerous studies and research that are ongoing to effectively respond to this problem. Majority of available literature on bullying come from these countries. Both their government and their educational systems continue to study this phenomena, specifically on how to have a proactive stance toward it (Georgakopoulos, Wilkin & Kent, 2011; Parson, 2015; and Hornby, 2016).

In Asian schools, bullying is seen as a serious problem, affects ranging from physical injuries to poor marks. The problem appears to be particularly pronounced in Manila, the Philippines, where a number of parents claimed that their own child had been bullied (cf Darmawan, 2010; Reyes, 2016; and Shaeffer ed., 2016).

In the Philippines, the NETRC (National Education and Testing

¹See also “Republic Act 10627 – Anti-Bullying Act of 2013”. Unpublished Document owned by the Author.
Research Center) came up with the study on bullying that focuses on determining the percentage of the students population that comprise bullies and establishing a profile of the offenders by age, gender, type of school, and curriculum level. It also aims to identify forms of bullying and the effects they may have on bullies and victims. The study also geared towards generating possible means to lessen, if not eradicate bullying (cited in Rosea, Espelage & Monda-Amaya, 2009; Brzezinski, 2016; and Reyes, 2016).

The study found out that the common and serious forms of bullying that occur among primary school children are: (1) exhibiting physical or motor aggression, which include kicking, hitting, shoving or pushing, moving about disruptively and throwing objects at another; (2) blurtling out or commenting, which includes answering without permission, giving unsolicited remarks, crying, screaming, and laughing; (3) producing disruptive noise with objects, such tapping pencil and tearing papers and engaging in various form of oral disturbances (cf Alexander, 2008; Hoffmann, 2013; and Reyes, 2016). The data gathered from the NETRC study reveals that victim of bullying commonly feel scared and threatened. They tend to feel vulnerable in school and may have an attendance problem. Also bullies are observed to be easily distracted from the class and may poorly perform. They may also hardly earn social acceptance from the rest of the students (Tangco, 2010; Ybarra et al., 2012; and Reyes, 2016).

In DepEd (Department of Education) Order No.40, s.2012, entitled “DepEd Child Protection Policy”, bullying is committed when the students commits an act or a series of single acts directed towards several students in a school setting or a place of learning, which result in physical or mental abuse, harassment, intimidation, or humiliation (Tangco, 2010; Reyes, 2016; and Faldas ed., 2018).² Such acts may consist of any one or more of the following: (1) Threats to inflict a wrong upon the person, honor or the property of the person on or his/her family; (2) Stalking or constantly following or pursuing a person in his/her or daily activities, with unwanted and obsessive attention; (3) Taking of property; (4) Public humiliation or public malicious imputation of a crime or of a vice versa or defect, weather real or imaginary, or any act of emission, condition, status, or circumstance tending to cause dishonor, discredit or expose a person to contempt; (5) Deliberating destruction or defacement of or damage to child’s property; (6) Physical violence upon committed upon a student, which may or may not results to harm or injury, with or without the aid of weapon, such violence may be in the form of mauling, hitting, punching, kicking, punching, throwing things at the students, pinching,spanking, or other similar acts; (7) Demanding or requiring sexual or monetary favors, or extracting money or property, from a pupil or student; and (8) Restraining the liberty and the liberty and freedom of a pupil or student (Tangco, 2010; Reyes, 2016; and Faldas ed., 2018).

The above policy also spells out the procedure in handling bullying incidents in the school. This is a manifestation that DepEd, people are really serious in addressing problems caused by bullying. The aforcited Order does not mandate the Commission on Higher Education to comply with, but may be a basis of formulating PNU (Philippine Normal University) policy to address issue on bullying, where the present study is interested (Schargel, 2014; Reyes, 2016; and Faldas ed., 2018).

²See also, for example, “DepED [Department of Education] Order No.40, s.2012, otherwise known as the Child Protection Policy”. Unpublished Document owned by the Author.
The above mentioned literature and studies discussed policies, incidents, and predictors of bullying in school here in the Philippines and abroad. As a result, bullying gained its recognition as a major issue to be given attention by authorities. This is one of the reasons why DepEd Order No.40, s.2012 otherwise known as “Child Protection Policy”; and RA No.10627 or the “Anti-Bullying Act of 2013” were created (Bennett, 2009; Schargel, 2014; and Reyes, 2016).

The present study is different from those above mentioned literature and studies, because it focuses on the bullying experiences of the Indigenous People Students of PNU–North Luzon and its social impact. Respondents were given an opportunity to suggest solutions to control bullying, which eventually becomes the basis of formal or institutional mandate to solve such problem (Bodkin-Andrews et al., 2012; Reyes, 2016; and Rosete et al., 2018).

BOR (Board of Regents) Resolution No.U-1852 created PNU–North Luzon as the Indigenous Peoples Education Hub, consequently, in June 2013, a freshmen class labeled as GE-IP (General Education – Indigenous People) was created exclusively for indigenous people students. The section labeling caught the attention of the researcher since the usual labels are GE 1, GE 2, GE 3 onward, and which case an IP (Indigenous People) student asked why their section label is different from the others (Reyes, 2016; and Rosete et al., 2018). This scenario further prompted the researcher to conduct this study.

This study sought to answer the following questions: (1) What forms of student bullying are experienced by the indigenous people students of PNU-North Luzon?; (2) How do the respondents handle bullying?; and (3) What suggestions are offered by the respondents to solve problem concerning bullying?

**METHODS**

**Research Design.** Descriptive qualitative research sets out to seek accurate and adequate descriptions of activities, objects, processes, and persons. It is not only concerned with fact gathering, but also with identifying and predicting relationships in and between variables. The main goal of this type of research is to describe the data and characteristics about what is being studied (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Williams, 2007; and Sampa, 2013). This was employed in this study to determine and analyze bullying experienced of PNU (Philippine Normal University)–North Luzon IP (Indigenous People) students (Reyes, 2016; and Rosete et al., 2018).

**Respondents.** The participants of this study are the II BEEEd (Bachelor of Elementary Education) – 2, the former GE-IP (General Education – Indigenous People) and other IP (Indigenous People) students of PNU (Philippine Normal University)-North Luzon. They were selected through purposive sampling and identified by the researcher through the help of the class adviser (Andaya, 2016; Reyes, 2016; and Rosete et al., 2018). During the vacant period of the participants, the researcher determined the bully and bullied by letting the participants fill out the form below. The researcher also looked into the record of oral and written reports on bullying in the Students’ Affair Office. See table 1.
Research Procedure. The researcher is the former adviser of the Cordillera Hempangapo Organization, a cordilleran indigenous people organization of PNU (Philippine Normal University), the researcher’s regular attendance to meeting and socialization with the IPs (Indigenous Peoples) founded good rapport that helped the researcher elicit very personal data from the respondents. To further gain the trust of the respondents, the researcher also joined gatherings of the Club of the Living Traditions, an organization which is composed of region 02 indigenous people students of PNU-North Luzon.

Planned and unplanned, small group, and one on one interviews were conducted the planned; small group and individual interviews were conducted in room 105; the assigned room for the researcher to take care; and in the Office of the Center for Indigenous Peoples Education which IP (Indigenous People) students think as their shelter in the campus and the researcher is the director of the center during the data gathering. An issue on students’ experiences that was positively resolved was presented to set the mood of the interview (Sampa, 2013; and Oltmann, 2016).

The researcher assured the respondents of the confidentiality of the interviews. The purpose and importance of the study was explained to the respondents before the interview to make it clear that the intention of the researcher is for the good of everybody, particularly helping PNU prevent bullying, citing the Anti Bullying Act and DepEd (Department of Education) Child Friendly Policy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following are the forms of bullying experienced by the IP (Indigenous People) students of PNU (Philippine Normal University)–North Luzon Campus:

Indirect Bullying. The indirect bullying was experienced by the IP (Indigenous People) students in the following situations:

Firstly, some students and some teachers wondered why there are IP whose skin complexion is fair and they perceived them as poor and backward.

Secondly, when some teachers and students recognized the presence of the IP students with seemingly sympathetic expression, such as telling: “So sweet oh, the IP students are here”. The IP students perceived this situation as if they are strangers in the school.

Thirdly, in the classroom, some teachers would tell: “I will explain the lesson/s in the mother tongue, so you can understand the topic well. You know it is only in your class that I am using the mother tongue”. This is underestimation to the IP students.

The allege giving of extra and special attention during class discussion and assigning several coaches during competition is perceived by the IP students as if they are intellectually inferior, weak, and can hardly cope with instruction/s (Marissa, 2014; interview with Respondent A, 3/7/2015; and Reyes, 2016).

Verbal Bullying. The following are the experiences of the IP (Indigenous People) students on verbal bullying:

Firstly, some students and teachers who do not know the first name of the IP student/s call them: “IP, IP, IP, or IP please come here”. The way it is said was sweet, but for the IP students, it is irritating.

Secondly, in the classroom, there are instances when some teachers who comment to a wrong answer as: “IP ka talaga, dumble etc.” and is even within the hearing of the whole class. This is very painful and demeaning to them, but they just bow their heads calmly.

Thirdly, when they were told by some teachers that they assigned students to monitor them in doing their obligations and in their attitude
AGNES S. REYES, 
Bullying Experienced

when telling the truth. This statement is repeatedly said during their classes. And worst, when the assigned students told the IP that the instruction of monitoring them was given during their class and within the hearing of their classmates. The IP students were also scolded for non-payment of their monetary obligation/s (interview with Respondent B, 3/7/2015; Sario, 2015; and Reyes, 2016).

Psychological and Institutional Bullying. This types of bullying were experienced by the IP (Indigenous People) students, when they were combined with BEEd (Bachelor of Elementary Education)-1 in one of their classes, where the seating arrangement made by teacher was for the IP students to sit at the back (interview with Respondent C, 3/7/2015; Cariaga & Tejada, 2016; and Reyes, 2016).

There are also some of the non-intentional bullying experienced by the IP students of PNU (Philippine Normal University)-North Luzon, as following here:

Firstly, the labeling of the IP students group when they were in first year was GE-IP (General Education – Indigenous People), which is in contrary to the usual labeling of sections in the first year curriculum as GE-1, GE-2 onward.

Secondly, when two IP students who performed well in the GE-IP class during the school year were transferred to BEEd-1. According to the IP students, their two classmates were their source of strength in the class, and yet they were taken from them.

Thirdly, some promises made before their entry at PNU were not accorded or did not materialize (interview with Respondent B, 3/7/2015; and Tangalin, 2015). It is noteworthy to mention that the present study noticed institutional bullying experienced among students in the tertiary level, but not in the previous studies conducted in the basic education (interview with Respondent B, 3/7/2015; and Tangalin, 2015).

Findings of the study conforms with the study of Suba, as cited by M.M. Tangalin (2015), conducted among grade school level of private schools in Quezon City. It shows that bullying happened inside the classroom and the most common form is verbal bullying (Tangalin, 2015).

On the other hand, the study of M.M. Tangalin (2015) noted the occurrences of indirect bullying among the students of Binakayan National High School. It is noteworthy to mention that the present study noticed institutional bullying experienced among students in the tertiary level, but not in the previous studies conducted in the basic education (interview with Respondent B, 3/7/2015; and Tangalin, 2015).

How Do the Respondents Handle Bullying? There are the steps to handle the bullying, as following here:

About an Indirect Bullying.

Regarding the perception of others on IP (Indigenous People) as being poor, backward and dark, the IP students usually told them that in their hometown, there are several IPs (Indigenous Peoples) whose skin complexion is fair and even white. Some are studying in a well-known University in the region and even in the country, supported by their own family (Biddle & Priest, 2014; interview with Respondent D, 10/7/2015; and Reyes, 2016).

It is just so unfortunate that these IP students, who are at PNU (Philippine Normal University)-North Luzon are poor, that is why they have to look for a University that they can afford financially. IP students, however, did not mind the perception of others about them, because they know it is not true and they are not even disturbed about it (interview with Respondent E, 10/7/2015; and Reyes, 2016).

In the instances when somebody told: “Oh, the IPs students are here!” Some IP students responded with a very naive smile; others just immediately left, while some others have no reaction as if they heard nothing (interview with Respondent F, 10/7/2015; and Reyes, 2016).
In the classroom, they are trying their best to communicate to their teachers in English or Filipino to show that they also know the language though not perfect. That is why during the visit of the Fulbright scholars at PNU–North Luzon, in 6th to 10th July 2015, the IP students requested the coordinator to leave them alone with Sir Dough during their meeting. The IP students were able to prove that they have the facility of the language and were able to manage their discussion using English as medium of communication (cf Fernandez, 2002; interview with Respondent E, 10/7/2015; and Reyes, 2016).

In their boarding houses and during vacant school hours, some of the IP students kept on studying their lessons, so that they could cope with the standard of PNU to lessen if not to eradicate the idea that IP are intellectually weak, inferior, and backward. This type of branding challenges them to improve their study habits (interview with Respondent F, 10/7/2015; and Reyes, 2016).

It is noteworthy, however, that to date some teachers are telling that the IP class performance is getting better compared with when they were in the first year at PNU. The IP students are also doing their best during their practice and actual performance in the University competitive activities to prove that they can follow instructions at par with other PNU students with the hope that, on the next competition, only one coach will be assigned to train them and not so many (Marissa, 2014; interview with Respondent D, 10/7/2015; and Reyes, 2016).

In the situation that other students are calling them IP instead of their name, some of the IP students pouted and consequently told their first name when called, while in the case of the teachers calling them IP, they just do their teachers’ request or command as a sign of voluntary obedience (interview with Respondent E, 10/7/2015; and Reyes, 2016).

About the Verbal Bullying. In the classroom, some teachers reacted negatively to a wrong answer of the IP (Indigenous People) students like: “IP ka talaga, dumble, etc.”. For the IP students, they took the comment as a challenge to strive more but upon arrival at their boarding houses, the victim/s kept crying in their bedroom. There was even a time that they entertain the idea of dropping the subject/s, transfer to other University, or even stop from schooling (Sonnie, 2013; interview with Respondent B, 3/7/2015; and Reyes, 2016).

In another instance, if some were put to shame, other IP students console them through sending inspiring text messages, others went to the boarding house of the victim/s to show their sympathy by giving pieces of advice, telling stories or relating situations that lighten the burden of the victim/s, while others cry with them (interview with Respondent A, 3/7/2015; Cariaga & Tejada, 2016; and Reyes, 2016).

The scolding for non-payment of financial obligation and telling that they have assigned students to monitor them pushed their determination to finish their studies. For the IP students, if education is one of the possible ways to uplift them from poverty, lessen prejudice, discrimination, and bullying experiences, they should not be discouraged but rather be inspired to continue their studies, despite those hurting words from some teachers and students (interview with Respondent C, 3/7/2015; Andaya, 2016; Reyes, 2016; and Regaspi, 2017).

About the Psychological Bullying. When a teacher assigned the IP (Indigenous People) students to sit at the back in the classroom, the more that the IP students felt that they were discriminated. They did not like that kind of seating arrangement. This is one of the reasons that they hesitated
to participate in class discussion. This did not motivate them to perform better. However, they just allow the situation to happen, because they could not do otherwise except to follow the instruction (interview with Respondent A, 3/7/2015; Andaya, 2016; and Reyes, 2016).

About an Institutional Bullying. The IP (Indigenous People) students of PNU (Philippine Normal University)–North Luzon Campus handled unintentional institutional bullying by simply accepting it. But, there was an instance that they consoled themselves by sharing the information to other students that it is only in the first curriculum year that sectioning is labeled as GE (General Education) anyway in the succeeding years, it is according to program like BEEd (Bachelor of Elementary Education) and BSEd (Bachelor of Secondary Education). This gave hope to the IP students (Sonnie, 2013; interview with Respondent B, 3/7/2015; and Reyes, 2016).

The second year curriculum was changed to BEEd – 2 former GE IP; hence, no particular group of people were identified. They also decided not to rely on any promises and be ready for any regrouping that will happen in the future. This indicates their improved level of maturity, cultural capital, and social capital (interview with Respondent B, 3/7/2015; Reyes, 2016; and Ganal, 2017).

In the preceding premises, it can be gleaned that IP students of PNU-North Luzon handled bullying in a positive way. According to Remez Sasson (2014) and other scholars, a positive person anticipates happiness, health, and success; and believes he or she can overcome any obstacle and difficulty (cf Sasson, 2014; Andaya, 2016; Reyes, 2016; and Ganal, 2017).

What Suggestions are Offered by the Respondents to Solve Problem Concerning Bullying? There are also some steps to solve the problems, as following here:

About an Indirect Bullying. According to the IP (Indigenous People) students, there should be a corner where they can display photos of different IP groups showing/indicating participation to school, community affairs and development, and list of successful IP in the country and abroad to show that there are IPs whose skin complexion is fair and are doing activities just like other Filipinos (interview with Respondent D, 10/7/2015; Barranta, Jr., 2016; and Reyes, 2016).

The above concept is justified by the idea that recognition enhances performance and generates greater success (cf Arquiza ed., 2007; Marissa, 2014; Sasson, 2014; Andaya, 2016; Reyes, 2016; and Ganal, 2017).

About the Verbal Bullying. There must be school policy specifying to call people by name and not label, because as the popular adage say: “The sweetest word to a man’s ear is his name”. Calling by name will enhanced the spirit of belongingness and unity (interview with Respondent D, 10/7/2015; and Reyes, 2016).

The IP (Indigenous People) students should enhance their study habits to cope with the standard of PNU (Philippine Normal University) to erase the perception that IP are intellectually inferior. According to the IP students, their subject – teachers should be patient, respectful, and should know how to process why IP students sometimes or even most of the time gave answer to the question/s of the teacher dubbed by the latter as “wrong” (interview with Respondent E, 10/7/2015; Andaya, 2016; and Reyes, 2016).

This concept of the IP students is back up by the conditions of learning that learning is facilitated in an atmosphere which consistently recognizes individual’s right to make mistake and an atmosphere in which
different ideas can be discussed but not necessarily accepted. Teachers should avoid scolding them within the hearing of others and they should just remind them for non-payment of financial obligation instead of being closely monitored by other students (Marissa, 2014; interview with Respondent F, 10/7/2015; and Reyes, 2016).

*About the Psychological Bullying.* To be more comfortable in the classroom, the IP (Indigenous People) students suggested that they be allowed to choose their seat. This gives a feeling of respect and acceptance and encourages them to be active in class. According to A. Lardizabal (1996) and other scholars, learning is facilitated in an atmosphere when individual feels that they are respected and accepted (*cf* Lardizabal, 1996; Saito, Imamura & Miyagi, 2010; Reyes, 2016; and Andi & Arafah, 2017).

*About an Institutional Bullying.* The usual labeling of section in the first year curriculum should be maintained according to the IP (Indigenous People) students. This is to avoid particularity. Looking Glass Self Theory advances the premise that how we look at ourselves depends on how others perceive us. So, the inclusion of the tribe to a section must be eradicated (interview with Respondent D, 10/7/2015; and Reyes, 2016).

Words of encouragement are motivational factor to pursue education/ studies. This is justified by another principle of learning which is learners must be motivated to learn (Lardizabal, 1996; Saito, Imamura & Miyagi, 2010; Marissa, 2014; Andaya, 2016; Reyes, 2016; and Galan, 2017).

The above mentioned ideas of the IP students manifest their innate capacity to handle and solve problems.

**CONCLUSION**

The section labeled GE-IP (General Education – Indigenous People) gives a feeling of discrimination among the IP students, who belong to the section. Calling IP (Indigenous People) instead of their names “Cheering IP, IP, IP!” during competitions hurts the IP students.

IP students can handle bullying in a more mature level by taking it as a challenge to strive more. IP students are capable of solving problems on bullying and can propose solutions to control.

The recommendations are the school should create a system wide policy on standardized labeling of sections of the students in the different year levels, not according to particular group of people. Educational Community should be culture sensitive to any school endeavor.  

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3 Statement: I, hereby, state that this research article was previously submitted for publication to one of the scholarly journals, namely: *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, Vol.6, No.1 [February 2016]. Available online also at: [http://www.aijcrnet.com/journals/Vol_6_No_1_February_2016/7.pdf](http://www.aijcrnet.com/journals/Vol_6_No_1_February_2016/7.pdf) [accessed in Lopez, Quezon, the Philippines: January 15, 2018]. But, by modifying and updating the References, I have submitted again to be reviewed by the *SUSURGALUR* journal. Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. This is also the reason why I was submitting this research article to the *SUSURGALUR* journal, because I know it very well that the *SUSURGALUR* is a scholarly and reputable journal. I hope the consideration on this matter. This is also to certify that the research article is an original work of the author.


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Interview with Respondent A, an IP [Indigenous People] Student of the PNU (Philippine Normal University)-North Luzon, in the Philippines, on 3 July 2015.

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Interview with Respondent C, an IP [Indigenous People] Student of the PNU (Philippine Normal University)-North Luzon, in the Philippines, on 3 July 2015.

Interview with Respondent D, an IP [Indigenous People] Student of the PNU (Philippine Normal University)-North Luzon, in the Philippines, on 10 July 2015.

Interview with Respondent E, an IP [Indigenous People] Student of the PNU (Philippine Normal University)-North Luzon, in the Philippines, on 10 July 2015.

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