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A research synthesis of effective programs to address gender-based violence in the school context: actors involved, and impacts achieved

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Gender-based violence is a social problem that is also present in schools. Scientific research on violence in the school setting has discussed schools as a context of socialization on gender violence, but also as a context where gender violence victimization can be prevented. Based on this, the objective of this study is to analyze and systematize the existing knowledge on effective programs addressing gender-based violence in school contexts (primary and secondary education) to identify the main components of effective programs and their key impacts. To this end, a research synthesis of the scientific literature was conducted. A total of 2,088 articles were initially retrieved from the primary scientific databases, and a final sample of 21 articles was analyzed after successive screening based on the inclusion criteria. Subsequently, the selected studies were analyzed according to the types of key actors involved in the programs studied and the impacts they informed. The results show, on the one hand, that there exist effective intervention programs that achieve positive impacts in preventing, reducing, and overcoming gender violence, which transform knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and experiences related to gender violence. On the other hand, effective intervention programs are characterized by involving key actors, especially the peer group, teachers, and the community, which highlights the importance of promoting bystander intervention, effective teacher training, and community participation as a whole-school approach to effectively addressing gender-based violence in the school context.

KEYWORDS

gender, violence, schools, prevention, community, peer group

1 Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a pervasive social issue that cuts across all areas of society, impacting people's lives in many ways. Its effects are particularly concerning when they begin early in life, affecting children and adolescents. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2014), nearly one in four girls aged 15–19 worldwide (about 70 million girls) reported having experienced some form of physical violence since the age of 15. Additionally, in 18 out of 21 countries with comparable data, the majority of adolescent girls who had suffered sexual violence were first victimized between the ages of 15 and 19. However, a substantial proportion of adolescent girls experienced such violence even earlier in life (UNICEF, 2014).

Despite increasing recognition of the problem, GBV remains alarmingly prevalent in schools around the world. UNESCO (2019) reports that one in three students worldwide has experienced some form of school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV), including sexual harassment, physical abuse, and psychological intimidation. This is especially concerning given that schools are expected to serve as safe and protective environments. A growing body of literature has examined the psychological, educational, and social impacts of SRGBV on students, such as school disengagement, absenteeism, reduced academic achievement, and long-term emotional distress (Parkes et al., 2016; Leach, 2015).

This article explores the features of educational programs designed to address GBV within school settings. While existing reviews have examined prevention initiatives from a public health or legal perspective, fewer have focused on school-based educational programs, especially through pedagogical and sociological lenses. This paper aims to address that gap by synthesizing current research in the field and proposing directions for future inquiry and policy development.

The structure of the article is as follows: first, we contextualized the problem through a literature review, highlighting the dual nature of schools as a protective or risk environment for children and youths in relation to GBV. Second, we outline the methodological approach used to select and analyze relevant programs. Third, we present the main findings, categorized according to program characteristics and reported outcomes. Finally, we discuss the implications of these findings for educational policy and practice, with a focus on equity, prevention, and student empowerment.

1.1 Schools as a context of socialization of gender based violence

Gender based violence (GBV) is defined as “violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering, against someone based on gender discrimination, gender role expectations and/or gender stereotypes, or based on the differential power status linked to gender” (UNESCO and UN Women, 2016). GBV includes violence against women (VAW), which is defined as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women” (United Nations, 1993). While women of all ages are the main collective affected by GBV, it is not limited to them. GBV also includes other forms of violence and discrimination based on gender-related factors such as sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

As a problem that permeates all areas of society, GBV is also present in the educational context. Schools are powerful agents of socialization regarding gender inequality and violence against women and girls. Particularly, schools have a relevant role in socialization and either challenge or reinforce risks of gender violence victimization. In this regard, the school has been identified as a potentially unsafe space where physical and sexual violence emerges (UNICEF, 2014). Indeed, different reports from international organizations inform us of SRGBV (Brookings Institution, 2021; European Commission, 2020; UNESCO, 2015; UNESCO and UN Women, 2016; UNESCO, 2021), defined as any

form of violence based on gender roles and relationships that takes place within the school, on the way to or around the school or educational institution. SRGBV includes explicit threats or acts of physical violence, bullying, verbal or sexual harassment, non-consensual touching, coercion, sexual assault, and rape. In response to this reality, research has studied the relationship between GBV and school context to better understand its origins, manifestations, and finally, potential solutions.

Studies on the causes of GBV in schools focus on understanding the processes of gender socialization and gender construction that begin in the early years of primary schooling. These studies highlight how differential gender socialization for boys and girls contributes to the creation of gender-based dynamics of inequality (Bhana et al., 2011). From early ages, boys and girls assume different gender norms, with boys manifesting typical masculine behaviors based on privilege and power, and girls assuming more subordinate positions, observable in friendships, games, and unequal relationships (Ngakane et al., 2012). In this sense, the relationship between inequalitarian gender attitudes and the development of violent attitudes and behaviors in the school environment has been pointed out (Varela et al., 2022), suggesting a relationship between school violence and gender violence. Therefore, inequalitarian gender beliefs, thoughts, and attitudes are seen as contributing factors to school violence. Consequently, addressing these attitudes through interventions that challenge gender stereotypes and sexist beliefs is essential for preventing GBV in educational settings (Ovejero et al., 2013; Theriot, 2008).

Beyond gender roles and norms learning, other studies analyze GBV as a result of a socialization pattern that promotes violent forms of masculinities. Studies on the preventive socialization of gender violence situate the origin of GBV in a coercive dominant discourse, one that historically links violence with attractiveness, and that is transmitted in multiple spaces of socialization, from mass media to the school context (Gómez, 2015). According to this perspective, girls are often socialized to associate desire and excitement with males who display dominant, inequalitarian, and even aggressive behaviors, increasing their risk of engaging in violent relationships (Valls et al., 2008). This research line emphasizes the need to transform interactions in the school context so that attractiveness is associated with egalitarian, non-violent individuals, while violent individuals are perceived as unattractive. Promoting this shift in perception is presented as an effective approach to preventing GBV in education (Racionero-Plaza et al., 2021).

Overall, these studies coincide in signaling the social construction of violent relationship patterns that lead to GBV among school-age children and youth. They also agree in pointing out the key role schools can play in transforming these patterns and preventing GBV.

1.2 Forms of school-related gender based violence

In terms of the forms in which SRGBV manifests, teen dating violence is among the most extensively studied. Different authors have identified the existence of a significant correlation between dating violence and school violence, in both directions: having

experienced physical or sexual dating violence influences a greater tendency to experience school violence (Vivolo-Kantor et al., 2016), while students who display violence behavior at school are also at higher risk of committing acts of violence in intimate relationships (Baier et al., 2021). Other studies focus on the relationships between experiences of community violence, family violence, and even cyber, physical, and sexual violence and dating violence perpetration and victimization (Black et al., 2015; Paat et al., 2020). These studies demonstrate the complexity and multidimensionality of the phenomenon, suggesting that understanding and addressing violence requires looking beyond schools and considering the overall context in which students live.

Although most studies on SRGBV focus on violence against girls, certain minority groups have also received special attention. Research shows that SRGBV increases in the case of vulnerable groups, such as students with disability or those who express non-normative sexual orientations or gender identities (UNESCO, 2015). In this regard, gender-related bullying and harassment are defined as “any unwanted behavior that imposes traditional, heterosexual gender norms”, including “sexual harassment, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying, and gender non-conforming bullying” (American Educational Research Association, 2013). Previous research has pointed out that violence against LGBTQIA+ students is among the most common types of violence in schools (Ballard et al., 2017; Gordon et al., 2018; Garaigordobil and Larrain, 2020; Olsen et al., 2014; Pina et al., 2021). Furthermore, specific types of attitudes have been distinguished as underlying such violence toward LGBTQIA+ in the school environment (Pina et al., 2022), including: (a) attitudes associated with gender stereotypes; (b) attitudes that justify intimate partner violence; (c) use of violence as a form of attraction; (d) use of violence as a form of socializing; (e) use of violence as a form of increasing self-esteem; (f) use of violence as a form of entertainment; and (g) use of violence when it is perceived as legitimate. Although these attitudes have been identified in the context of violence toward gender or sexual minorities, they are also common to other forms of GBV. As such, understanding these underlying attitudes can help in identifying and preventing the emergence of gender-based violence in schools.

Initially, anti-bullying interventions were implemented with limited emphasis on the gender dimension (Espelage and Swearer, 2004). However, in recent years, educational programs have been implemented to explicitly address gender violence in the school context, creating new opportunities to tackle this reality (Crooks et al., 2019; Pérez-Martínez et al., 2023). The existing body of research underscores the complex reality of GBV affecting children and youth within the school context, emphasizing the importance of avoiding considering different forms of violence as an isolated phenomenon. Instead, it calls for a comprehensive, cross-cutting global perspective when designing preventive interventions.

1.3 Schools as protective contexts against gender based violence

Scientific research on SRGBV has emphasized that schools, as a key context of socialization, have the potential to prevent and address these situations. Notably, research has identified

protective factors that influence the experiences of violence in the school setting. Among these, school connectedness and social support are recognized as critical preventive elements, expressed through: (1) positive and quality interpersonal, friendship, or peer group relationships, (2) effective responses by educational staff to situations of violence, and (3) the involvement of the whole community in rejecting and overcoming violence.

Firstly, positive peer relationships play a particularly relevant role in preventing adolescents from getting involved in dating violence. High-quality friendship can shape students' expectations in dating relationships, reduce their tolerance for aggression, and foster supportive and healthy environments (Sullivan et al., 2022). These relationships also help to dismantle beliefs that legitimize violence and gender violence in particular, by promoting non-violent models of attraction, thus preventing situations of gender violence (Elboj-Saso et al., 2022). Therefore, improving student relationships is a relevant objective of school-violence prevention efforts. Some studies focus on training students in pro-social skills and behaviors, such as conflict resolution, empathy, or social-emotional learning (Baier et al., 2021; Davis et al., 2019; Horn and Schriber, 2020; Mendoza González et al., 2020; Theriot, 2008). Other studies highlighted the positive impact of bystander intervention in preventing GBV (Farley et al., 2020; Gallardo-Nieto et al., 2021; Ortega et al., 2004). Active bystanders, those who support victims and challenge the culture of silence, are recognized as crucial for overcoming violence. Encouraging such behavior fosters a more peaceful and respectful climate in schools and strengthens peer solidarity (González-Alonso et al., 2020; Ortega et al., 2004). In sum, promoting non-violent attitudes, pro-social behaviors, and peer positive support protects children and youth from GBV victimization in the school context.

Secondly, social support can extend beyond the peer relationships to include the entire educational community. Social support from close circles, such as parents and teachers, can help prevent chauvinism and reduce acceptance of violence among both boys and girls (Pérez-Martínez et al., 2021). However, different studies have identified a consistent lack of response and a lack of effectiveness in how school leaders and teachers address bullying, gender-based violence, and sexual violence, often due to insufficient knowledge (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2009; Forber-Pratt and Espelage, 2018; Rawlings, 2019). Research has also found that situations of violence against sexual and gender minorities tend to intensify when adults fail to intervene. In such cases, students who do not receive help may respond in their own ways, resulting in disciplinary actions within the school (detention, suspension, exclusion from their educational experiences through transfers to other schools or classrooms) (Horn and Schriber, 2020). This evidence underscores the importance of developing comprehensive prevention programs targeting educational staff as the primary recipients of interventions to empower them to respond effectively.

Thirdly, beyond involving teachers as key actors in the prevention of GBV, community-based collaboration is necessary. Professionals from various sectors, such as school social workers, parents, and all educational staff, must share responsibility for ensuring student safety (Theriot, 2008). A community-wide, multi-sectoral, and whole-school approach enables a more holistic response to promote the well-being of the school community (Keating and Baker, 2023; Steiner and Spear, 2020). One example

of this approach is the Dialogic Model of Conflict Prevention and Resolution (DMCPR), which engages families and the community to improve school climate and prevent bullying. Its positive impact on the improvement of school coexistence are linked to: (a) the use of egalitarian dialogue; (b) the inclusion of all the diversity of community voices in the prevention and resolution of school conflicts; and (c) the empowerment of children and adolescents to reject violence and support victims with confidence (Duque et al., 2021; Padrós, 2014; Villarejo-Carballido et al., 2019). Thus, research suggests that involving the broader community expands the resources and contexts available for tackling school violence and strengthens GBV prevention efforts.

2 Methods

The objective of this research synthesis is to identify and analyze the existing evidence from previous research on school violence in primary and secondary schools, with the focus on interventions that have had a practical impact on addressing GBV. The research questions guiding this synthesis are:

- (1) Which interventions have been impactful in addressing GBV in school contexts?
- (2) Which are the features, actors involved, and types of impact of these effective intervention programs?

Considering the current state of the art, this synthesis aims to enhance understanding of interventions that integrate both a gender and participatory dimension to address violence in schools and improve school climate effectively. Accordingly, the review is conducted with a transformative orientation, aiming to identify elements that can support the prevention and reduction of GBV in school settings.

We conducted a research synthesis, which, according to Cooper (2017), involves integrating empirical evidence from primary studies. We followed an integrative approach (Compton-Lilly et al., 2021), reviewing findings from a body of research to provide a comprehensive understanding of our research questions. To complete our research synthesis, we proceeded in several steps following Cooper's recommendation: (1) formulating a problem for a research synthesis, (2) searching the literature, (3) extracting information from the studies, (4) interpreting the synthesis outcomes, and (5) presenting the synthesis results.

2.1 Search and selection of the literature

We developed a protocol for searching the literature based on the PICo framework for qualitative studies, defining the Population (school children aged 6–18), the Interest (intervention programs for GBV prevention, reduction, or overcoming), and the Contexts (school settings) (Murdoch University Library, 2024). Based on this framework, we developed specific keywords and conducted an electronic search across major academic databases (see Table 1). Searches were conducted in three key databases: Web of Science, Scopus, and PsycINFO. Additionally, we conducted a targeted search in high-impact journals in the fields of education and

TABLE 1 Keywords used for the document search.

Population/context	Topic	Intervention
Children	School violence	Program
Student	Gender violence	Model
Classroom		Intervention
School		Bystander
Pupil		Community
		Impact
		Prevent
		Reduce
		Overcome

gender. For this purpose, we selected high-quality journals in the JCR ranking for education (“Education and Educational research”) and gender (“Women’s studies”), as well as journals with the FECYT¹ seal of quality in educational sciences.

Every search included one keyword for each category in Table 1 (population/context, topic, and intervention), allowing for multiple keyword combinations to maximize document retrieval. We also applied the following restriction criteria: the year of publication (from 2007 to 2022) and the type of document (scientific article or report). For the Web of Science database, the search was limited to results obtained in the “Social Sciences” knowledge area. Figure 1 illustrates the document selection process.

The initial database search retrieved 2088 registers. After removing 75 duplicates, 2013 registers remain for screening. We applied inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure that all studies met the scope of our review. Studies had to: (1) focus on specific intervention programs aimed at addressing GBV; (2) be situated in a school setting (primary or secondary education); (3) provide evidence of effectiveness, i.e., impact on preventing, reducing, or overcoming GBV (see Table 2).

We began by screening titles, excluding 1,829 registers that did not meet the inclusion criteria, resulting in 184 registers selected for further abstract screening. After applying the inclusion/exclusion criteria at the abstract level, we excluded 102 registers, leaving 82 remaining articles for full assessment. During the full-text review, we excluded 52 articles that addressed the problem of GBV in school contexts but did not focus on or report results based on an intervention program. An additional eight articles did not provide elements for preventing, reducing, or overcoming GBV in schools, and one more article was not situated in the school context. Thus, 61 articles were excluded. The final review included 21 articles that met all criteria and addressed the research questions.

2.2 Data extraction and analysis

To extract the data, a system of categories and subcategories was created in advance. In line with our research questions, we defined

¹ Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology.

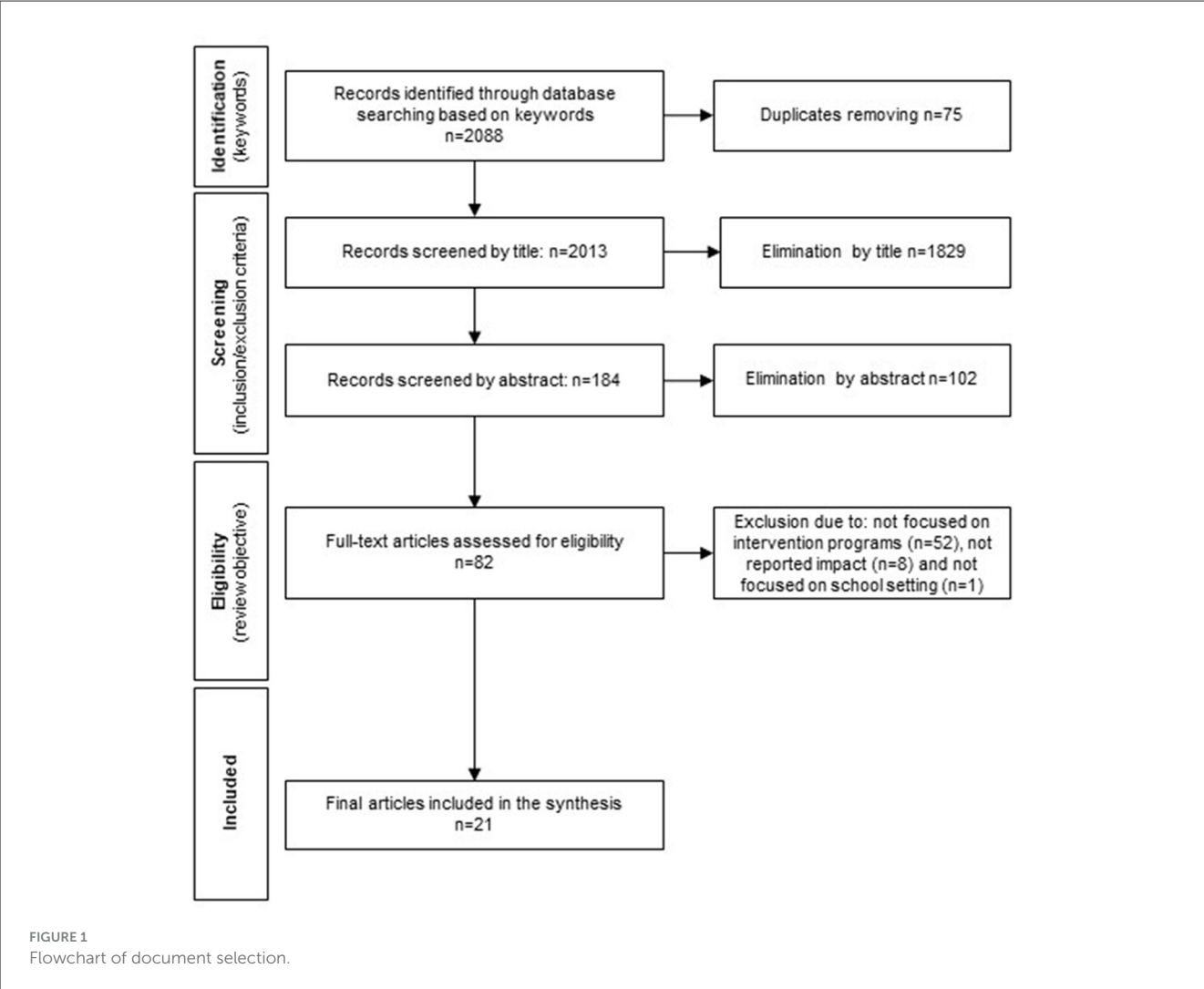


TABLE 2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The study focuses on an intervention program.• It focuses on gender-based violence in school settings (primary or secondary education).• It reports evidence of impact on the prevention, reduction, or elimination of gender-based violence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not focused on the school context.• Age of participants over 18 years old.• Not related to the prevention, reduction, or elimination of gender-based violence.

two main analytical categories: (a) the actors involved and (b) the observed impact, and their respective subcategories (see Table 3). For the analysis, we conducted a full-text review of each study and assigned relevant information to the appropriate categories based on the impacts reported and the actors involved. This process provided an overall overview of the two key dimensions central to our analysis.

TABLE 3 Categories for the analysis of the selected studies.

Categories	Subcategories
a) Actors involved in effective interventions.	Peer group
	Community
	Teachers
	Other actors
b) Impact achieved on preventing/reducing/overcoming gender-based violence	Prevention
	Reduction
	Overcoming

3 Results

Table 4 shows an overview of the studies included in the synthesis. As follows, we will first describe the main characteristics of the studies selected. Next, we will analyze

TABLE 4 Summary of the selected studies.

Study	Educational level	Sample	Country	Intervention program	Research methods ^a	
Abebe, K. Z., Jones, K. A., Ciaravino, S., Ripper, L., Paglisotti, T., Morrow, S. E., et al. (2017). A cluster-randomized trial of a middle school gender violence prevention program: design, rationale, and sample characteristics. <i>Contemp. Clin. Trials</i> 62, 11–20.	Secondary education	$N = 973$ adolescent athlete boys aged 11–14 of 41 middle schools	USA	Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM)	Quantitative	Experimental study. Cluster-randomized school-based controlled trial. A survey was administered three times over two years to observe changes resulting from the program.
Craig, S. L., Tucker, E. W., and Wagner, E. F. (2008). Empowering lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth: lessons learned from a safe schools summit. <i>J. Gay Lesbian Soc. Serv.</i> 20, 237–252.	Secondary education	$N = 24$ adolescent boys and girls, mostly aged between 15 and 18.	USA	Safe Schools Summit	Mixed methods	Survey consisting of Likert scale questions and open-ended questions.
de Lange, N., and Mitchell, C. (2014). Building a future without gender violence: rural teachers and youth in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, leading community dialogue. <i>Gend. Educ.</i> 26, 584–599.	Secondary education	$N = 3$ teachers, 1 man and 2 women	South Africa	Not Leaving Data in the Dark	Qualitative	Teachers' reflections were collected about the development of the intervention.
Gonzalez, C., Mera-Gaona, M., Tobar, H., Pabón, A., and Muñoz, N. (2022). TSIUNAS: a videogame for preventing gender-based violence. <i>Games Health J.</i> 11, 117–131.	Secondary education	$N = 424$ adolescent boys and girls aged between 12 and 19 years	Colombia	Videogame “Tsiunas”	Mixed methods	Surveys and interviews were conducted before and after the intervention.
Iuso, S., Petito, A., Ventriglio, A., Severo, M., Bellomo, A., and Limone, P. (2022). The impact of psycho-education on school-children's homophobic attitudes. <i>Int. Rev. Psychiatry</i> 34, 266–273.	Secondary education	$N = 191$ male and female secondary school students, aged 12–14 years old	Italy	Amarsi per Amare	Quantitative	Pre- and post-intervention measures (collected 2 months later) were assessed to evaluate the impact of the intervention on empathy quotients, gender-related stereotypes, homophobic attitudes, anger, and emotional regulation.
Jewkes, R., Gevers, A., Chirwa, E., Mahlangu, P., Shamu, S., Shai, N., et al. (2019). RCT evaluation of Skhokho: a holistic school intervention to prevent gender-based violence among South African Grade 8s. <i>PLoS ONE</i> 14:e0223562.	Secondary education	All students in grade 8 classes of 24 state schools ($N = 3756$), caregivers ($N = 1144$), and teachers	South Africa	Skhokho	Quantitative	Three-arm cluster randomized controlled trial. The arms were a no-intervention control group, the schools' package group, and the combined schools' and families' package group. The impact of the intervention was assessed using a self-administered questionnaire for students, caregivers, and teachers, 6 months after the baseline, 12 months, and 18 months later.

(Continued)

TABLE 4 (Continued)

Study	Educational level	Sample	Country	Intervention program	Research methods ^a	
Jones, K. A., Tancredi, D. J., Abebe, K. Z., Paglisotti, T., and Miller, E. (2021). Cases of sexual assault prevented in an athletic coach-delivered gender violence prevention program. <i>Prev. Sci.</i> 22, 504–508.	Secondary education	N = 1,520 male high schoolers and 973 male middle schoolers	USA	Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM) [®]	Quantitative	Secondary data analysis of two previous randomized controlled trials. Anonymous surveys were administered at baseline, before the intervention's delivery, and at a one-year follow-up.
Jouriles, E. N., McDonald, R., Rosenfield, D., and Sargent, K. S. (2019). Increasing bystander behavior to prevent adolescent relationship violence: a randomized controlled trial. <i>J. Consult. Clin. Psychol.</i> 87, 3–15.	Secondary education	N = 165 male and female high school students	USA	TakeCARE	Quantitative	Randomized controlled trial. Self-report measures of bystander behavior (<i>Bystander Behaviors Scale</i>) and bystander self-efficacy (<i>Bystander Efficacy Scale</i>) were collected before the intervention. One week later, the measures were repeated, and participants were observed in virtual reality simulations of situations in which they could engage in bystander behavior.
Katz, J., Heisterkamp, H. A., and Fleming, W. M. (2011). The social justice roots of the mentors in violence prevention model and its application in a high school setting. <i>Violence Against Women</i> 17, 684–702.	Secondary education	N = 1744 male and female high school students	USA	Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP)	Quantitative	Experimental study (experimental/control groups). Data collected through surveys 3 months after the MVP implementation. Questions covered student perceptions of wrongfulness and student self-reports of taking action.
López de Aguilera, G., Torras-Gómez, E., García-Carrión, R., and Flecha, R. (2020). The emergence of the language of desire toward nonviolent relationships during the dialogic literary gatherings. <i>Lang. Educ.</i> 34, 583–598.	Primary education	N = 113 male and female students	Spain	Dialogic Literary Gatherings	Qualitative	Case study framed within the communicative methodology of research. Data was collected through three focus groups with students and participatory observations.
Merrill, K. G., Merrill, J. C., Hershow, R. B., Barkley, C., Rakosa, B., DeCelles, J., et al. (2018). Linking at-risk South African girls to sexual violence and reproductive health services: a mixed-methods assessment of a soccer-based HIV prevention program and pilot SMS campaign. <i>Eval. Program Plann.</i> 70, 12–24.	Primary and secondary education	N = 394 female students in grades 6 and 7, aged 11–16, from three schools	South Africa	SKILLZStreet	Mixed methods	Quantitative methods included tracking participant attendance and SMS platform usage, administering pre- and post-questionnaires, and conducting structured observations. Qualitative data were collected from program participants, parents, teachers, and a social worker during 6 focus group discussions and 4 in-depth interviews.
Miller, E., Jones, K. A., Ripper, L., Paglisotti, T., Mulbah, P., and Abebe, K. Z. (2020). An athletic coach-delivered middle school gender violence prevention program: a cluster randomized clinical trial. <i>JAMA Pediatr.</i> 174, 241–249.	Secondary education	N = 973 adolescent athlete boys aged 11–14 of 41 middle schools	USA	Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM)	Quantitative	Experimental study. Cluster-randomized school-based controlled trial. A survey was administered three times over two years to observe changes resulting from the program.

(Continued)

TABLE 4 (Continued)

Study	Educational level	Sample	Country	Intervention program	Research methods ^a	
Oliver, E., Soler, M., and Flecha, R. (2009). Opening schools to all (women): efforts to overcome gender violence in Spain. <i>Br. J. Sociol. Educ.</i> 30, 207–218.	Primary education	Six primary schools	Spain	Dialogic Model of Conflict Prevention and Resolution	Qualitative	Communicative daily-life stories with students and relatives. Interviews with teachers and other professionals working in the public administration or the community.
Padrós, M. (2014). A transformative approach to prevent peer violence in schools: contributions from communicative research methods. <i>Qual. Inq.</i> 20, 916–922.	Primary and secondary education	Two primary schools and one secondary school	Spain	Dialogic Model of Conflict Prevention and Resolution	Qualitative	Communicative observations Documentary analysis Communicative focus groups with teachers.
Pick, S., Leenen, I., Givaudan, M., and Prado, A. (2010). “Yo quiero, yo puedo... prevenir la violencia”: Programa breve de sensibilización sobre violencia en el noviazgo (“I want to, I can... prevent violence”: Brief awareness program on dating violence). <i>Salud Ment.</i> 33, 145–152.	Secondary education	N = 281 male and female students in public high schools	Mexico	Interactive conferences about dating violence	Quantitative	Pre- and post-intervention questionnaire to evaluate knowledge and attitudes toward violence.
Powell-Williams, T., Foley, A., and Davies, K. (2020). “So I won’t go to jail”: year two of a PROMUNDO-adapted program to eradicate gender-based violence. <i>Masculinities Soc. Change</i> 9, 85–105.	Primary education	N = 11 boys aged from 9 to 12	USA	PROMUNDO	Mixed methods	Pre- and post-intervention measures were collected on gender-equitable beliefs, support for traditional masculinity, acceptability of fighting and violence, and intent to act upon witnessing mistreatment. Additionally, at the post-test, boys were asked open-ended questions about what they had learned from the program. Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with the program’s instructors. Informal discussions with the school’s principal and assistant principal.
Racionero-Plaza, S., Ugalde, L., Merodio, G., and Gutiérrez-Fernández, N. (2020). “Architects of their own brain.” social impact of an intervention study for the prevention of gender-based violence in adolescence. <i>Front. Psychol.</i> 10:3070.	Secondary education	N = 126 male and female adolescents of three high schools	Spain	Interventions based on the framework of preventive socialization of gender violence	Mixed methods	Longitudinal design of repeated measures. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected before the first intervention, as a baseline measurement. Once the program began, measurement was conducted for a second time (post-test 1) and when the intervention finished (post-test 2). Qualitative data: 10 communicative focus groups. Quantitative data: surveys that evaluated adolescents’ perceptions about the value of every intervention.

(Continued)

TABLE 4 (Continued)

Study	Educational level	Sample	Country	Intervention program	Research methods ^a	
Ruiz-Eugenio, L., Puigvert, L., Ríos, O., and Cisneros, R. M. (2020). Communicative daily life stories: raising awareness about the link between desire and violence. <i>Qual. Inq.</i> 26, 1003–1009.	Secondary education	12–13-year-old girls of two high schools	Spain	Dialogic Feminist Gatherings	Qualitative	10 communicative daily life stories
Taylor, B. G., Stein, N., and Burden, F. F. (2010). Exploring gender differences in dating violence/harassment prevention programming in middle schools: results from a randomized experiment. <i>J. Exp. Criminol.</i> 6, 419–445.	Secondary education	<i>N</i> = 1639 male and female students of seven middle schools	USA	Gender violence/harassment prevention program	Quantitative	Randomized control trial with two intervention groups –interaction-based curriculum and law and justice curriculum– and a control group. A survey was administered at baseline, immediately after the treatment, and six months later. The survey asked for prevalence and incidence on the experience of being a victim and/or perpetrator of sexual violence and nonsexual (physical) violence by/of peers, and people they had dated.
Taylor, B., Stein, N., and Burden, F. (2010). The effects of gender violence/harassment prevention programming in middle schools: a randomized experimental evaluation. <i>Violence Vict.</i> 25, 202–223.	Secondary education	<i>N</i> = 1639 male and female students of seven middle schools	USA	Gender violence/harassment prevention program	Quantitative	Randomized control trial with two intervention groups –interaction-based curriculum and law and justice curriculum—and a control group. A survey was administered at baseline, immediately after the treatment, and six months later. The survey asked for prevalence and incidence on the experience of being a victim and/or perpetrator of sexual violence and nonsexual (physical) violence by/of peers, and people they had dated.
Williams, D. J., and Neville, F. G. (2017). Qualitative evaluation of the mentors in violence prevention pilot in Scottish high schools. <i>Psychol. Violence</i> 7, 213–223.	Secondary education	<i>N</i> = 91 male and female students and 9 staff	Scotland (UK)	Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP)	Qualitative	Semi-structured interviews with teaching and non-teaching staff and focus groups with mentors and mentees (students)

^aThe studies' results have been included in Table 5, "Summary of the studied intervention programs" in the "Impacts" column. For the interventions analyzed in more than one study, the reference of the related research has been included for each impact.

the primary features of the studied interventions aimed at addressing SRGBV.

3.1 Selected studies description

The 21 selected studies report on the impacts of 15 distinct intervention programs implemented across various national contexts. Geographically, most studies were conducted in the

USA (*n* = 9) and European countries (*n* = 7), with lesser representation in African countries (*n* = 3) and Latin America (*n* = 2).

Regarding the target population, most interventions specify the educational stage of the students involved. The majority of studies focus on secondary education students (*n* = 16 articles), followed by studies in primary education (*n* = 3 articles), and a small number of studies on both primary and secondary education students (*n* = 2 articles).

In terms of the methodological approach, the studies are categorized as follows: 10 studies employ a quantitative empirical approach, 6 studies adopt a qualitative empirical approach, and 5 studies utilize a mixed empirical approach. The quantitative studies were experimental. Seven used randomized controlled trials. Others followed pre-post designs with one or more repeated measures. The mixed-methods studies also included pre- and post-intervention measures for the quantitative component and collected qualitative data through open-ended questions, focus groups, or interviews. The qualitative studies focused on collecting participants' experiences and reflections from students, teachers, other professionals, and relatives, using methods such as focus groups, daily-life stories, interviews, observations, and documentary analysis.

Most studies included information that enables assessment of their quality and relevance, focusing on the following aspects: quality of the implementation of the intervention ($n = 6$), soundness of the research design ($n = 13$), reliability of data collection instruments ($n = 5$), and the significance, generalizability, or impact of the results ($n = 11$). Several studies described measures to ensure the quality and fidelity of the interventions, including monitoring and assessment (Abebe et al., 2017; Miller et al., 2020; Taylor B. G. et al., 2010; Taylor B. et al., 2010), training (de Lange and Mitchell, 2014), or standardization of the procedures (Iuso et al., 2022). Other studies highlighted strength in research design, such as inter-researcher reliability (Craig et al., 2008; López de Aguilera et al., 2020), use of the communicative methodology to enhance social impact (López de Aguilera et al., 2020; Oliver et al., 2009; Padrós, 2014; Racionero-Plaza et al., 2020; Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2020), large sample size (Taylor B. G. et al., 2010), randomized control trial (Abebe et al., 2017; Jewkes et al., 2019; Jouriles et al., 2019; Miller et al., 2020; Taylor B. G. et al., 2010; Taylor B. et al., 2010) or inclusion of control group (Katz et al., 2011). Several studies also addressed the validity of the data collection instruments (Gonzalez et al., 2022; Iuso et al., 2022; Merrill et al., 2018; Pick et al., 2010; Racionero-Plaza et al., 2020). However, most studies also acknowledge limitations, including small or homogeneous samples (Craig et al., 2008; de Lange and Mitchell, 2014; Jewkes et al., 2019; Powell-Williams et al., 2020; Williams and Neville, 2017), limited generalizability of the findings to other settings or populations (Jones et al., 2021; Merrill et al., 2018; Miller et al., 2020; Williams and Neville, 2017), short implementation periods and lack of long term evidence of impact (Jewkes et al., 2019; Jones et al., 2021; Pick et al., 2010), difficulties in accurately measuring impact evidence (López de Aguilera et al., 2020), challenges in obtaining data on direct impact on the students (de Lange and Mitchell, 2014), reliance of self-reported data (Racionero-Plaza et al., 2020), and positive but statistically weak or small effect results (Jewkes et al., 2019; Katz et al., 2011).

The following section presents the main results of the research synthesis, focusing on two key aspects of the analyzed interventions: the actors involved and the impacts identified in addressing GBV in the school environment.

3.2 Actors involved in effective interventions to address school-related gender-based violence

The literature review has enabled the analysis of the key actors involved in intervention programs that have proven effective in addressing GBV in educational contexts. Notably, we identified three main categories: (a) interventions focused on the students ($n = 14$ interventions), (b) interventions in which teachers play a prominent role ($n = 5$ interventions), and (c) interventions adopting a community-based perspective ($n = 7$ interventions). While some interventions targeted a single actor group, others involved the participation of two or more types of actors. Table 5 summarizes the main characteristics of the intervention programs analyzed.

3.2.1 Interventions focused on the students

Most of the reviewed interventions target students in primary or secondary education. These programs consider *students as the primary target of the interventions*, aiming to improve their knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors to prevent or reduce GBV. While most programs address both boys and girls, some are specifically designed for particular student groups based on gender-related issues. For example, Coaching Boys into Men (CBIM) (Abebe et al., 2017; Jones et al., 2021; Miller et al., 2020) and Promundo (Powell-Williams et al., 2020) programs are designed for boys and aim to reduce abuse and sexual violence in adolescent relationships, promote critical thinking regarding masculinity, aggression, and violence, and foster effective communication and non-violent conflict resolution skills. In contrast, SKILLZStreet (Merrill et al., 2018) targets female adolescents, addressing sexual and reproductive health challenges. Other programs target both boys and girls, but have an explicit focus on LGBTQ+ students, such as Safe Schools Summit (Craig et al., 2008) and Amarsi per Amare (Iuso et al., 2022).

Several reviewed programs position students not only as recipients but also as active agents for change. *Programs based on the bystander intervention* recognize the crucial role of the peer group as upstanders in front of situations of violence and seek to build students' capacity to act against perpetrators and in defense of victims, always based on self-efficacy to intervene safely (Jouriles et al., 2019). The bystander approach is often embedded in peer learning models (Williams and Neville, 2017), which promote student involvement, the creation of support networks, and positive changes in attitudes toward GBV. In these initiatives, students play a key role in improving the school climate by reporting abusive behavior, adopting a critical understanding of violence, and viewing it as something unacceptable and unattractive, thus fostering transformative dynamics aimed at overcoming GBV. Intervention programs based on bystander intervention include Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP), Coaching Boys into Men (CBIM), TakeCARE, and Safe Schools Summit. Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) (Katz et al., 2011; Williams and Neville, 2017) uses peer group processes and learning to promote a bystander approach and overall climate that does not tolerate

TABLE 5 Summary of the studied intervention programs.

Intervention program	Participants	Facilitators	Setting	Brief description of the intervention program	Impacts
1. Amarsi per Amare (Iuso et al., 2022)	Boys and girls aged 12–14 years old attending a secondary school	Investigators delivered the program directly to the adolescents.	School	Psycho-educational program aimed to promote awareness of sexual variations and reduce homophobic prejudices and stereotypes, based on a cognitive-behavioral approach. The program included 8 weekly meetings for each class and topic, based on formative activities such as circle time, role-playing, and viewing filmed images.	Reduced homophobia toward gays (−9.38%) and lesbians (−5.42%). Improved emotional adjustment (+25.9%), prosociality (+3.85%), empathy (+11.3%), and levels of state anger (+0.35).
2. Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM) (Abebe et al., 2017; Jones et al., 2021; Miller et al., 2020)	Male athletes in middle school (Abebe et al., 2017; Miller et al., 2020)	Trained athletic coaches	Schools with formal athletics	Athletic coaches received a 60-minute training to become positive role models on adolescent relationship abuse and sexual violence. After the training, the coaches delivered 12 weekly mini-lessons (of about 15 min) to the adolescent male athletes throughout the sport season on three topics: (1) what constitutes disrespectful and harmful vs. respectful relationships and behaviors, (2) promoting more gender-equitable attitudes, and (3) positive bystander intervention when witnessing aggressive male behaviors toward females. Coaches were provided with a kit containing strategies and vignettes helpful in discussing these topics. (Abebe et al., 2017; Miller et al., 2020)	Positive bystander behaviors and recognition of abuse increased at the end of the sports season and the 1-year follow-up. Among those who ever dated, athletes on teams receiving CBIM reported lower recent adolescent relationship abuse and sexual violence. (Miller et al., 2020)
	Male athletes in middle school and high school (Jones et al., 2021)			Athletic coaches received training to discuss key topics related to dating abuse and sexual violence prevention with the male adolescents (e.g., encouraging bystander intervention). Coaches were provided a toolkit with prompts and information to implement weekly discussions with their athletes throughout a three-month sports season. (Jones et al., 2021)	A decrease in perpetration in high school boys compared to baseline and follow-up measures (dating abuse: 16.5% to 14.9%; sexual harassment: 10.0% to 9.6%; sexual assault: 3.2% to 2.2%), while control participants reported increases in the three forms of perpetration. For middle school athletes, perpetration rates remained stable or decreased among intervention participants, while they remained stable or increased among control participants. (Jones et al., 2021)
3. Dialogic Gatherings (López de Aguilera et al., 2020; Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2020)	11–13-year-old male and female 6 th grade students in two elementary schools (López de Aguilera et al., 2020)	School teachers implemented the intervention (López de Aguilera et al., 2020)	School	Dialogic gatherings are dialogue-based educational interventions in which students engage in a collective interpretation of a previously read text. Dialogic Literary Gatherings: Students read and debated a classic literary text, either an adaptation of Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" or an adaptation of "The Iliad", depending on the school. For DLG sessions, students previously read the pages they had agreed upon at home. In class, they discussed such extracts in an egalitarian dialogue with their peers. The role of the teacher during the activity was that of the moderator. A total of 28 sessions were conducted in the two schools. (López de Aguilera et al., 2020) Dialogic Feminist Gatherings are egalitarian dialogues that encourage one another to question the dominant model of socialization in relationships, where attraction is often linked to violent behaviors, and to reorient these desires toward nonviolent relationships. DFGs were used as a one-time intervention conducted with female adolescents, lasting between 1.5 and 2 hours. (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2020)	Dialogic features of the DLG facilitate the emergence of the "language of desire" in conjunction with the "language of ethics," promoting nonviolent relationships. These forms of language were present when discussing romantic love, attractiveness based on values and courage. It suggests the potential of DLG to prevent gender-based violence and other forms of harassment. (López de Aguilera et al., 2020)

(Continued)

TABLE 5 (Continued)

Intervention Program	Participants	Facilitators	Setting	Brief description of the intervention program	Impacts
	Girls aged between 12 and 13 years in two high schools. (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2020)	Investigators delivered the program directly to the adolescents. (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2020)			Girls acquired tools for reflection and for removing attraction from violent masculinity: questioned their own criteria based on the dominant discourse, identified violent boys in their contexts, and identified violent situations they had experienced. (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2020)
4. Dialogic model of conflict prevention and resolution (Oliver et al., 2009; Padrós, 2014)	Primary school students, their relatives, teachers, and other professionals in the public administration and the community (Oliver et al., 2009)	The school was already implementing the program	School	The Dialogic Model of Conflict Prevention and Resolution encourages people from the entire community to participate in developing and implementing norms for preventing and resolving conflicts within schools. This approach is based on a dialogue that enables the contributions of all social actors to be equally valued in these processes of norm definition.	Community participation enables diverse profiles of female relatives and volunteers to find ways to have their voices recognized more deeply in the school, particularly in the processes of preventing gender violence. Including the voices of all women contributes to identifying situations of gender violence, expands the understanding of what is considered to be gender violence within the school community, and facilitates the design of school-based processes to prevent violence that affects these girls. (Oliver et al., 2009)
	Two primary and one secondary school (Padrós, 2014)				Enhanced identification, visibility, and tackling of situations entailing gender violence. Perceived improvements in terms of school climate, violence prevention, and violence reduction. (Padrós, 2014)
5. Gender violence/harassment prevention program (Taylor B. G. et al., 2010; Taylor B. et al., 2010)	Male and female students of 123 6 th and 7 th grade classrooms from seven middle schools	The lessons were taught by an experienced A female educator from a local sexual assault center.	School	The intervention consisted of either an interaction-based curriculum or a law and justice curriculum. The law and justice curriculum focused on the consequences of not obeying boundaries (e.g., rules, laws). The interaction-based treatment centered on how one notices that boundaries have been crossed or violated, either in terms of transmitting oneself or understanding how someone else might indicate that their boundaries had been crossed. Both types of intervention contained five lessons (designed to last 40 minutes each) and were taught over about five consecutive weeks.	Reduced peer violence victimization and perpetration. Improved awareness of abusive behaviors, attitudes toward GV/SH, and personal space, and knowledge. Increase in dating violence perpetration, possibly explained by the fact that interventions might have affected the students' sensitivity to the problem of gender violence (GV)/sexual harassment (SH), which made it more likely for them to identify and report certain dating behaviors as GV/SH.
6. Interactive conferences about dating violence (Pick et al., 2010)	Male and female students in public high schools.	-	School	Eight interactive conferences were delivered in public high schools in four urban cities. The interactive conferences lasted 2 hours and half and covered the following topics: life skills (communication, negotiation, decision making); differentiation between the concepts sex, sexuality and gender and their relationship with violence; how to recognize violence, types and its relationship with gender stereotypes and gender roles; the cycle of violence, how to recognize signs of dating violence, and healthy ways to express love. The conferences were delivered interactively through theatre plays, role-playing exercises, and small-group discussions.	Increase in identification of violence, knowledge of its causes, and healthy ways of expressing love.

(Continued)

TABLE 5 (Continued)

Intervention Program	Participants	Facilitators	Setting	Brief description of the intervention program	Impacts
7. Interventions based on the framework of preventive socialization of gender violence (Racionero-Plaza et al., 2020)	Adolescent girls and boys attending high school are mostly 15–16 years old.	Investigators delivered the program directly to the adolescents	School	Evidence-based program of preventive socialization of gender violence. It consisted of seven interventions, each lasting an hour, that were conducted over six months with the adolescents in their classroom, involving the entire class group. The interventions covered the following topics: the social nature of love and attraction; the dominant coercive discourse; infidelity and the role of friends and peers on it; the negative impact of toxic relationships on health; new alternative masculinities; consent in sexual-affective relationships, and the false idea/concept that love kills and “micro-chauvinism”. In most cases, the content was delivered in the format of a talk by a researcher; in some cases, it consisted of a video screening or the reading of brief texts. In all cases, the content presentation was followed by a group discussion.	Enhanced critical consciousness regarding the dominant coercive discourse. Learning cognitive tools to analyze sexual-affective thinking, emotions, and behavior in favor of rejecting violence in intimate relationships. Modification of female adolescents’ preferences moving attraction toward egalitarian masculinities. Utilization of knowledge gained from the interventions to help close persons reflect on the quality of their relationships. Leaving toxic relationships.
8. Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) (Katz et al., 2011; Williams and Neville, 2017)	Adolescent girls and boys attending high school, in grades 9 through 12. (Katz et al., 2011)	The program trains mentors who will act as school leaders and facilitators of change in schools.	School	Program aimed at training a group of student leaders (MVP mentors) to: (1) catalyze change in gendered social norms around the acceptance of abuse, harassment, and violence, (2) equip peers with options to intervene as empowered bystanders, and (3) encourage all students to respond to abuse, harassment, and bullying. Training includes topics such as group facilitation skills, dating violence prevention, bullying, harassment awareness, harassment and targeting of gay, lesbian, and transgender students, and role-play activities. MVP mentors acquire 16–20 hours of training before facilitating mentoring sessions with groups of younger students. (Katz et al., 2011)	The high school students exposed to the MVP program, directly or indirectly, were more likely to report forms of violence as being wrong and were more likely to intervene in contexts in which aggressive behaviors were being exhibited. (Katz et al., 2011)
	Adolescent boys and girls in three secondary/high schools. Mentors were 5 th or 6 th -year students (aged 15–18), and the mentees were 1 st or 2 nd -year students (aged 11–14) (Williams and Neville, 2017)			Violence prevention program to encourage non-violent bystander intervention with a particular emphasis on GBV. It is designed to provide bystanders with practical strategies for intervening in discouraging or interrupting violent situations. The intervention is delivered in group sessions, where realistic social scenarios are presented and role-played, followed by interactive discussions. (Williams and Neville, 2017)	Positive attitudinal and behavioral change regarding gender-based violence was reported by school staff, mentors, and mentees, raising awareness of GBV, a more proactive approach to intervention, but was particularly prevalent amongst mentors. Support networks outside the classroom were facilitated. (Williams and Neville, 2017)
9. Not leaving data in the dark (de Lange and Mitchell, 2014)	A small group of committed rural teachers	Investigators conducted the program with the teachers, who could later act as facilitators of change among adolescents.	Not specified	A participatory analysis process was conducted with the participant teachers based on “digital retreats”. Based on a series of participatory video productions previously created by secondary school youth on the issue of gender-based violence, the participant teachers first co-produced data with the researchers about the material through coding, and then made a composite video (video of videos), which would later would be used to engage the local community of parents, teachers and learners in a community dialogue around gender-based violence as a tool for change.	Enhanced teachers’ conscientization about the role they could and should play in addressing gender-based violence in their rural school and community.

(Continued)

TABLE 5 (Continued)

Intervention Program	Participants	Facilitators	Setting	Brief description of the intervention program	Impacts
10. PROMUNDO (Powell-Williams et al., 2020)	Adolescent boys aged 9 to 12 (4 th and 5 th grade). All the boys were African-American	The program was taught by two male teachers with the help of a male employee of the local rape crisis center.	School	The program was composed of 10 lessons, which overall were aimed at: (1) promoting critical thinking regarding masculinity, aggression, and violence, and (2) fostering the skills necessary for effective communication, prosocial emotional expression, and non-violent conflict resolution. Sessions were delivered through interactive role-playing exercises that built upon one another. The program was offered once per week for one hour during the school year.	Learning emotional expression, anger management, and non-violent conflict resolution. Enhanced awareness of connections between maladaptive emotional responses, violence, and negative sanctions. The skills learned had a positive impact on non-participating students.
11. Safe Schools Summit (Craig et al., 2008)	Adolescent girls and boys with diverse sexual orientation: 40% gay, 24% lesbian, 16% straight, 12% bisexual, and 8% queer. All participants had to be interested in making schools safe for all.	-	Safe Schools Summit	Weekend-long encounter organized annually to empower adolescents and their adult supporters to initiate change in their school communities to minimize bullying and strengthen gay-straight alliances.	Participating in the summit had a positive impact on adolescents in terms of: a) catharsis: being able sharing their stories, empower them collectively and learn of others' coping strategies; b) strengthened skills to meet their goals of making schools safer; c) confrontation: as a result of the summit most of the respondents planned to confront violence by initiating dialogue defending a victim; d) make schools safer: participants reported that the summit enabled them to work for making schools safer.
12. Skhokho (Jewkes et al., 2019)	High school students in grade 8, caregivers, and teachers.	The program was delivered to students, caregivers, and teachers. Schools' Life Orientation teachers received training and positive discipline sessions facilitated by project staff.	School	There were two intervention groups: The schools' package and the combined schools' and families' package. The schools' package included a Life Orientation (LO) curriculum workbook for the Grade 8 national curriculum (students) and teacher Training. Contents covered aspects such as understanding one's sexuality and the impact of peers, friends, and family; relationships (appropriate behavior and communication skills); substance abuse, human rights violations, gender-based violence, and prevention; and cultural diversity. The family package included a workshop for caregivers and teenagers to strengthen their relationships.	Lower incidence of physical or sexual IPV, less childhood trauma, less bullying, and more equitable gender attitudes in the intervention groups. Improvement in caregivers' communication with their children, increased knowledge of the child, and a reduction in parenting stress. A better-perceived school environment and lower self-reported teacher stress. Reduction in female caregivers' own IPV experiences.
13. SKILLZStreet (Merrill et al., 2018)	Female adolescents aged 11–16	The intervention was facilitated by trained female community leaders, known as “coaches.”	School	Soccer-based life skills program aimed at supporting adolescent girls at risk for HIV, gender violence, and sexual and reproductive health challenges. The program uses non-competitive soccer to empower girls, create a safe space for discussion and learning, and encourage girls to advocate for their rights. The program consisted of 10 2-hour sessions, conducted after school hours twice a week for five weeks. Teams were organized with an average participant-coach ratio of 10:1. During the sessions, structured discussions and soccer-based activities focused on life skills, including topics such as body image, reproductive health knowledge, and decision-making in relationships.	Improvements in participants' perceptions toward gender equitable norms and intimate relationships, communication with others about sexual reproductive health, self-esteem, and self-efficacy to avoid unwanted sex.

(Continued)

TABLE 5 (Continued)

Intervention Program	Participants	Facilitators	Setting	Brief description of the intervention program	Impacts
14. TakeCARE (Jouriles et al., 2019)	Male and female students of a low-income urban public high school	Investigators delivered the program directly to the adolescents	School	A video-based bystander program aimed to help prevent relationship and sexual violence among high school students. It focuses on promoting self-efficacy by presenting students with various risky and violent situations. For each situation, the video models and describes possible actions, along with concrete examples, to reduce the risk of violence and support victims. The program implementation lasts under 30 minutes.	Increased reported bystander behavior Increased observed bystander behavior Increased reported self-efficacy Self-efficacy partially mediated the effects of TakeCARE on observed bystander behavior.
15. Videogame “Tsumas” (Gonzalez et al., 2022)	Adolescent boys and girls aged between 12 and 19 years	-	School	A videogame aimed at increasing GBV awareness by presenting game situations representing attitudes and beliefs that justify unequal and violent relationships. Players must resolve gender conflicts that have been described in the video game and recreate conditions similar to those that adolescents might encounter in the real world.	Changes in opinion regarding beliefs about patriarchal patterns, reduced tolerance levels of violence against women, attitudes toward violence against women, and better recognition of co-responsible masculinities.

sexist abuse and promotes the prevention of GBV. The program trains mentors to serve as school leaders and change agents in schools. Coaching Boys into Men (CBIM) (Abebe et al., 2017; Jones et al., 2021; Miller et al., 2020) involves training sports coaches of teenage boys in discussions about gender violence and dating abuse, and promoting bystander intervention when they witness disrespectful behaviors among their peers. TakeCARE (Jouriles et al., 2019) is a video-based bystander training program that models bystander behavior by providing examples of actions that can be taken in situations of violence. Finally, the Safe Schools Summit (Craig et al., 2008) empowers students to promote change in their school communities to reduce bullying.

Another group of interventions emphasizes an *interactive and dialogic approach* among students. These include Dialogic Literary Gatherings (López de Aguilera et al., 2020) and Dialogic Feminist Gatherings (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2020). Dialogic Literary Gatherings consist of a collective debate and interpretation of literary texts, which brings together the peer group to discuss and construct meaning collectively on the issues raised. The choice of books that include diverse relationship models allows the peer group to reflect critically on them and to promote their preference toward non-violent affective-sexual relationships. Dialogic Feminist Gatherings center around collective debates and reflections on key issues related to risk factors and protective factors for gender violence. These dialogues in the peer group challenge desires imposed by patriarchal norms and help transform them into preferences for non-violent relationships, contributing to the prevention of GBV. Another program grounded in dialogue and student interaction is a series of interventions based on the preventive socialization of GBV (Racionero-Plaza et al., 2020). These interventions aim to encourage a critical analysis of the dominant coercive discourse that links attraction with violence among adolescent students. Through lectures and group dialogue, participants are provided with cognitive tools to better understand their own and others' affective-sexual thinking, as well as to modify adolescent girls' sexual preferences for different types of men. The peer group ends up playing a significant role by adopting a courageous and defensive stance to speak out and offering alternative viewpoints when faced with violent attitudes and behavior from their peers. The involvement of the peer group is particularly relevant in creating safer school environments that are less tolerant of violence. These three actions are based on the exercise of egalitarian dialogue in the peer group. They are also closely related to the preventive socialization of gender violence, as they facilitate spaces in which to critically reflect on the dominant coercive discourse that makes relationships based on abusive behavior something desirable.

Other programs combine lessons and interactive activities to promote awareness of GBV and foster positive behaviors among students. These include the Promundo program (Powell-Williams et al., 2020), the Interactive Conferences about Dating Violence (Pick et al., 2010), and SKILLZStreet (Merrill et al., 2018). In these programs, lectures are supplemented with activities such as discussions, theater plays, role-playing, and small-group interactions to promote change among students.

3.2.2 Interventions with a prominent role of teachers

Several interventions have positioned teachers as key actors in tackling GBV in schools. Teachers can play a relevant role in these programs, either as the primary target of the intervention or as a facilitator of its implementation.

Programs with *teachers as intervention targets* aim to enhance their knowledge of GBV and equip them with the skills to identify and appropriately respond to such situations. These interventions often include components designed to raise students' awareness of GBV, with teachers acting as disseminators of information. In this role, teachers deliver specially designed curricula through various methods, including subject-specific lessons, interactive lectures, video screenings, role-plays, and debates, among other activities. Notable examples include the Skhokho and Not Leaving Data in the Dark programs. Not Leaving Data in the Dark (de Lange and Mitchell, 2014) focuses on encouraging teachers' reflection and awareness of GBV, enabling them to become agents of change within their school. The Skhokho program (Jewkes et al., 2019) provides teacher training on curricular content to be taught to students, covering topics such as sexuality and the impact of peers, friends, and family; appropriate behavior and communication skills in relationships; substance abuse, human rights violations, gender-based violence and prevention; and cultural diversity.

In other interventions, such as Promundo, the Dialogic literary gatherings, and the Dialogic Model of Conflict Prevention and Resolution, *teachers have a key role as facilitators of the interventions*. In the Promundo program (Powell-Williams et al., 2020), for instance, two male teachers helped adapt the intervention and implemented it with their male students throughout the academic year. Meanwhile, the Dialogic literary gatherings (López de Aguilera et al., 2020) and the Dialogic Model of Conflict Prevention and Resolution (Oliver et al., 2009; Padrós, 2014) are school-wide projects rooted in dialogic learning, aimed at fostering positive coexistence and reducing peer violence.

Overall, these programs address topics such as understanding key gender-related concepts, identifying different forms of violence, recognizing signs of violence in adolescent relationships, developing interpersonal and communication skills, managing anger, resolving conflicts non-violently, and promoting healthy relationships. While students are often the ultimate beneficiaries, these interventions highlight the role of teachers in preventing GBV within the school environment.

3.2.3 Interventions with a community perspective

A significant proportion of the interventions focuses on involving various actors from the educational community. Some programs incorporate professional roles beyond teachers, recognizing their importance in implementing the interventions. Others adopt a whole-school community approach, engaging students, teachers, relatives, and other community members to tackle GBV in a coordinated manner.

Among the *interventions that involve diverse professional profiles*, the role of sports coaches is particularly noteworthy. Two programs, Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM) and SKILLZStreet, utilize this profile to promote positive behaviors that help prevent

GBV. Interestingly, while Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM) (Abebe et al., 2017; Jones et al., 2021; Miller et al., 2020) targets adolescent males, the SKILLZStreet (Merrill et al., 2018) is aimed at adolescent females. Both programs use after-school sport activities to create a safe space for discussion, learning, empowerment, the promotion of gender-equitable attitudes, and the cultivation of healthy relationships. Other initiatives involve GBV professional experts, such as staff from local centers for victims of sexual assault. These experts contribute by delivering educational sessions in classrooms, as seen in the dating violence/harassment prevention program in middle schools by Taylor B. G. et al. (2010); Taylor B. et al. (2010), or by supporting lesson delivery of the Promundo program (Powell-Williams et al., 2020).

On the other hand, some interventions adopt a *whole-school approach*. One example is the Safe Schools Summit (Craig et al., 2008), which involved both students and community members in workshops designed to strengthen gay-straight alliances and promote inclusive school policies. The primary goals were to empower LGBTQIA+ students and foster advocacy skills. Another example is the South African project Skhokho (Jewkes et al., 2019), which includes a broader community intervention that primarily targets students while also involving teachers, professors, and family members. This program includes training for teachers aimed at improving school coexistence. In addition, this program includes workshops for parents to strengthen family relationships and the creation of school clubs focused on enhancing communication and promoting safety in student relationships.

Finally, the Dialogic Model of Conflict Prevention and Resolution (Oliver et al., 2009; Padrós, 2014), implemented in various schools in Spain, involves the entire educational community (students, teachers, relatives, and other community members). This model emphasizes collective rule-setting and co-creation of actions to enhance coexistence. Community participation takes the form of mixed committees, assemblies, and meetings, where all diverse voices are included, equally valued, and heard in deliberative processes. This process is grounded in egalitarian dialogue to design actions to improve school climate and prevent GVB.

3.3 Impacts of the interventions on the prevention, reduction, and overcoming of gender violence

Impacts related to the prevention of GBV are the most frequently reported outcomes across the studies analyzed ($n = 15$), with a smaller number also documenting reductions or the overcoming of GBV situations ($n = 5$). Table 5 summarizes the main impacts achieved by the studied intervention programs.

Programs targeting students contribute to the prevention of school-based gender violence in various ways. Interventions that promote *students' bystander intervention*, such as Coaching Boys into Men (CBIM) (Abebe et al., 2017; Jones et al., 2021; Miller et al., 2020), Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) (Katz et al., 2011; Williams and Neville, 2017), Safe Schools Summit (Craig et al., 2008), and TakeCARE (Jouriles et al., 2019) have shown preventive impact effects. These include the increased bystander

behavior, greater likelihood of intervening in aggressive situations to defend victims, increased student engagement in reporting and rejecting violence, stronger disapproval of violence against women, positive shifts toward more egalitarian attitudes and behaviors, improved recognition of abusive behavior, and enhanced skills for creating safer school environments. In addition to these preventive outcomes, the “Coaching Boys into Men” (CBIM) program has also demonstrated reductions in the perpetration of abuse in adolescent relationships (Miller et al., 2020). Notably, it resulted in a decrease in dating abuse (from 16.5% to 14.9%), sexual harassment (from 10.0% to 9.6%), and sexual assault (from 3.2% to 2.2%) (Jones et al., 2021).

Interventions with a component of interaction among students, such as Promundo (Powell-Williams et al., 2020), SKILLZStreet (Merrill et al., 2018), and the Interactive conferences about GBV (Pick et al., 2010), also achieved preventive effects. These included improved skills related to healthy ways of emotional expression, non-violent conflict resolution, and communication about intimate relationships, as well as better recognition of violence, greater understanding of its causes, and enhanced support for gender equity in norms and intimate relationships. Other interventions using dialogic and interactive methods, such as the Dialogic Gatherings (López de Aguilera et al., 2020; Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2020), contributed to GBV prevention by promoting non-violent relationships among adolescents, questioning harmful preferences, identifying violent individuals and violent situations, and raising awareness of the attractiveness of egalitarian and respectful relationships. Interventions grounded in the preventive socialization of GBV, which employed an interactive and dialogic approach within peer groups, had impacts not only on prevention but also on the reduction and even overcoming of GBV (Racionero-Plaza et al., 2020). This program led to changes in students’ desires toward more respectful relationships, open rejection of violent behavior within peer groups, the transfer of the knowledge to friends and community members, and even the termination of toxic relationships.

Interventions targeting students’ beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, such as Amarsi per amare and Tsiunas, also show positive outcomes. Amarsi per amare (Iuso et al., 2022) reported a 9.38% decrease in homophobic attitudes toward gay boys, and a 5.42% reduction toward lesbian girls, along with an increase in empathy, prosocial behavior, emotional regulation, and anger management among students. The video game Tsiunas (Gonzalez et al., 2022) led to improved attitudes toward violence against women, lower tolerance of such violence, shifts in beliefs regarding patriarchal patterns, and better recognition of co-responsible masculinities.

Among programs with *teachers as the intervention target*, Not Leaving Data in the Dark (de Lange and Mitchell, 2014) improved teachers’ awareness and understanding of their role in addressing GBV in schools and communities, enhancing their potential to contribute to GBV prevention. The Skhokho program (Jewkes et al., 2019) led to a more positive school environment, reduced incidents of physical or sexual partner violence, less bullying, and more equitable gender attitudes, indicating both preventive and reductive impacts.

When *teachers were the facilitators* –such as in Promundo, Dialogic Gatherings, and the Dialogic Model of Conflict Prevention and Resolution– they supported students in learning conflict

resolution skills (Powell-Williams et al., 2020), improved the identification, visualization, and response to GBV situations (Padrós, 2014), and encouraged changes in students’ language when discussing about violent or non-violent relationships. In this regard, students used a combination of language of ethics and desire when talking about non-violent relationships (López de Aguilera et al., 2020).

Interventions with a *community-based approach*, involving a wide range of stakeholders, also empower participants to act against GBV. Programs adopting a whole-school approach, including students, caregivers, and teachers, such as the Safe Schools Summit, strengthened students’ abilities to make schools safer. In this case, 92% of participants reported feeling more empowered and committed to addressing bullying (Craig et al., 2008). The South African Skhokho project (Jewkes et al., 2019) also improved the school environment, reduced intimate partner violence and bullying, and promoted more equitable gender attitudes. Additionally, family members involved in the program reported improved communication with their children, and particularly female caregivers noted a reduction in their own experiences of intimate partner violence. The Dialogic Model of Conflict Prevention and Resolution had a notable preventive impact by improving the identification and recognition of GBV within the schools (Padrós, 2014). The intervention fosters a deeper understanding of GBV situations. The collaboration of diverse women in the design and implementation of actions for GBV prevention plays a significant role, due to their essential role in identifying instances of violence and raising awareness throughout the school community (Oliver et al., 2009).

Other interventions involving community actors, such as sports coaches or educators from sexual assault centers, also contributed to prevention and overcoming GBV. In the Coaching Boys into Men (CBIM) program (Abebe et al., 2017; Jones et al., 2021; Miller et al., 2020), athletic coaches successfully promote positive bystander behaviors, increase gender-equitable attitudes, and reduce abuse perpetration in male adolescents. In the SKILLZStreet program, female coaches created a “safe space” for girls to discuss sensitive issues and promoted improved perceptions of gender equitable norms, enhanced communication with others about sexual reproductive health, and increased self-esteem and self-efficacy to avoid unwanted sex (Merrill et al., 2018). In another case, the Promundo program facilitated the development of positive emotional expression and conflict resolution among adolescents, extending its influence to non-participant students. Meanwhile, the GBV/harassment prevention program by Taylor B. G. et al. (2010); Taylor B. et al. (2010) raised awareness about abusive behaviors and attitudes toward GBV and reduced rates of peer victimization. However, the program also noted an increase in reports of dating violence perpetration, a result the authors interpreted as a possible outcome of heightened sensitivity to GBV, leading students to more easily recognize and report problematic behaviors such as GBV or sexual harassment.

4 Discussion

After identifying effective interventions for addressing GBV in the school context, our analysis has allowed us to identify some

common features of these intervention programs. Considering the transformative orientation of this review and the evidence collected in the literature that highlights three key actor groups in creating GBV protective school environments –the peer group, teachers, and the community–, we structured the analysis on the intervention programs' characteristics and operation and their impacts, considering also these actor groups' participation and roles.

Previous research has already highlighted that peer group dynamics strongly influence the acceptance or rejection of violence, as well as its association with attraction toward egalitarian relationships free of abusive behavior. Positive peer relationships that promote egalitarian and non-violent relationships play a protective role by fostering supportive interactions and undermining violent models of attraction among children and youth (Sullivan et al., 2022; Elboj-Saso et al., 2022). Our analysis confirms that interventions that build supportive relationships among students, promote respectful and prosocial attitudes and skills, and equip students with skills that support and protect victims of violence have a positive impact on preventing GBV. Furthermore, the reviewed programs suggest that, alongside whole-school or whole-class approaches, targeted interventions that address specific groups, e.g., boys, girls, and LGBTQ+ students, can enhance impacts by acknowledging their particular potential role as victims, perpetrators, or bystanders.

In this context, bystander intervention emerges as a particularly transformative approach. It empowers students to safely intervene in abusive situations, challenge the culture of silence, and question the social norms that legitimize GBV. This results in increasing a lower tolerance and rejection of violence and, ultimately, fosters a preventive socialization centered on seeking relationships based on respect rather than on domination and aggression (Gómez et al., 2025; Katz et al., 2011). The reviewed programs confirm the effectiveness of such a strategy, particularly when students are trained as mentors or role models and have opportunities to practice responses in specific situations that prepare them for real-life situations.

Teachers play a key role as the primary adult presence in the school context. Prior research has noted that insufficient teacher knowledge of bullying and GBV in schools often results in inconsistent and ineffective responses (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2009; Forber-Pratt and Espelage, 2018; Rawlings, 2019). The interventions analyzed highlight the importance of equipping teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to recognize and appropriately respond to GBV. Their role in raising awareness and teaching skills among students is equally important, as it fosters change among children and youth. In this regard, teacher training on evidence-based strategies for addressing GBV in school contexts is essential for effective interventions (Rios-Gonzalez et al., 2023).

Community involvement also emerges as a crucial element in the reviewed studies. Including all members of the educational community, that is, students, families, teachers, and other community members, in the fight against GBV in schools can help address the complexity of a problem that often extends beyond school premises. This inclusive participation in awareness-raising and training activities, as well as in decision-making regarding the creation of norms that aim to build a school climate free

from violence, has a positive influence on reducing and preventing GBV. Furthermore, research suggests that interventions grounded in the sociocultural context of the school increase community engagement and strengthen program outcomes (Pérez-Martínez et al., 2021).

Additionally, most of the effective interventions rely on creating dialogue-based strategies, providing spaces where knowledge, experiences, and beliefs can be shared and transformed. Programs rooted in dialogic learning and leadership have enabled the involvement of multiple actor profiles (students, teachers, families, and community) in egalitarian dialogue with a shared purpose, yielding effective results (Khaqan and Redondo-Sama, 2024). These methods have been shown to foster non-violent attitudes, skills, and behaviors when they are not only taught but also practiced and discussed collectively.

In recent years, several reviews have addressed the topic of gender-based violence in school contexts. These reviews have analyzed the impact of interventions aimed at preventing gender-based violence among children and youth, focusing on different issues. These issues include the analysis of programs aimed at preventing or reducing dating violence (De La Rue et al., 2016), the comparative effectiveness of school-based interventions on dating and relationship violence and gender-based violence victimization, perpetration, and related mediators (Farmer et al., 2023; Melendez-Torres et al., 2023), the effectiveness of GBV programs in the context of sexuality education (Aznar-Martínez et al., 2025), the analysis of success factors of effective interventions (Villardón-Gallego et al., 2023), interventions focused in low- and middle-income countries (Lowe et al., 2022), and the effects of bystander programs in preventing sexual violence (Kettrey et al., 2019). Overall, these reviews found positive impacts related to dating violence knowledge and attitudes (De La Rue et al., 2016); awareness of gender violence and self-protection, overcoming stereotypes, and decrease in the acceptability of gender-based violence (Aznar-Martínez et al., 2025; Villardón-Gallego et al., 2023); lower rape myth acceptance and improved bystander efficacy (De La Rue et al., 2016; Kettrey et al., 2019); improving relationships in the classroom, reducing violent behavior, and empowering vulnerable students (Villardón-Gallego et al., 2023); improving gender-equitable attitudes and increasing likelihood to intervene in situations of violence (Lundgren and Amin, 2015); and preventing sexual violence (Lundgren and Amin, 2015), and violence victimization and/or perpetration (De La Rue et al., 2016; Lowe et al., 2022; Melendez-Torres et al., 2023). Additionally, some characteristics of programs related to positive effects are highlighted. These characteristics are: being integrated into the school curriculum (Farmer et al., 2023; Villardón-Gallego et al., 2023), promoting active participation of students and community, being based on scientific evidence, and making relevant adaptations to specific groups and contexts (Villardón-Gallego et al., 2023). The reviews also suggest the importance of sustained interventions to ensure impacts in the long term (Farmer et al., 2023; Kettrey et al., 2019; Lundgren and Amin, 2015). Some of the reviews highlight peer group education and bystander intervention as effective strategies (Kettrey et al., 2019; Lowe et al., 2022; Lundgren and Amin, 2015), and some of them refer to the community-based component as a means of maximizing the intervention impact

(Lowe et al., 2022; Lundgren and Amin, 2015). However, none of the previous reviews have explicitly analyzed the diversity of agents involved in the intervention programs, their roles, and how they contribute to preventing and addressing GBV in schools. Our research synthesis contributes to the existing knowledge by providing this analysis.

Overall, the programs included in our review align with key features of successful interventions to prevent violence against women and girls identified by previous literature reviews. These include a robust theory of change, responsive to the local context, engaging with women and men, trained and supported staff and volunteers, gender-empowering group activities that promote positive interpersonal relations, and participatory learning methods that emphasize critical reflection and communication skills (Jewkes et al., 2021), as well as interactive interventions based on dialogue that allow students engage in meaningful reflections that are conducive to change in attitudes and behaviors (Lowe et al., 2022; Villardón-Gallego et al., 2023). This synthesis contributes to a clearer understanding of how peers, teachers, and the community can play meaningful roles in addressing SRGBV, the impact of their involvement, and how effective engagement can be promoted to build safer, more protective school environments.

This research synthesis is not exempt from limitations. Firstly, some geographical contexts are overrepresented in the selected studies, as 9 of the 21 studies were conducted in the USA and 7 in Europe, meaning that more than half of the studies are from English-speaking countries. Africa and Latin America are underrepresented (with three studies and two studies, respectively), and other regions are entirely absent. Secondly, vulnerable groups are insufficiently represented. As noted in the review by Crooks et al. (2019), groups particularly at risk of experiencing violence, such as girls with disabilities, in state care, from cultural minorities, in poverty, or with non-normative gender-sexual identities, are often underrepresented in research. While our review does include some studies explicitly focused on LGBTQ+, other realities remain overlooked. Thirdly, not all studies provided the same information about the analyzed programs or with the same level of detail. The methodological diversity also led to heterogeneous data, including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods designs. The reported results range from quantified reductions in violent situations to improvements in awareness, identification, and recognition of GBV, reported feelings of empowerment, or changes in attitudes and behaviors. As Crooks et al. (2019) have argued, while RCTs offer methodological strengths, this methodological strategy may not be the most appropriate in all cases. Methodological designs should be tailored to the community where the program is implemented, which facilitates the sustainability of the intervention. Some programs included in our review were developed specifically for research, while others were already embedded in school or broader community practices. This diversity adds complexity, but also enriches the analysis and provides a more comprehensive understanding of effective strategies. Finally, although most studies included information about program quality, there was variation in how rigor and utility were demonstrated. While many studies report strategies to enhance the quality of intervention implementation, research design, and data collection instruments, other studies also report limitations regarding the significance,

generalizability, or magnitude of the results. Further research should expand geographically, including broader and more diverse samples, and assess longer-term impact. Additionally, future studies could also explore how the most effective components of these interventions can be optimized, combined, and scaled to advance the elimination of GBV in the school context.

5 Conclusions

The purpose of this research synthesis is to systematize existing knowledge on educational interventions that effectively address the problem of GBV in the school context, thereby enhancing our understanding of their key characteristics and effects.

The review of intervention programs aimed at tackling GBV in schools shows that it is possible to intervene from the school context to address GBV. The analyzed programs emphasize the transformative capacity of schools and communities to create a socialization context that protects against GBV. These interventions in the school context primarily produce preventive outcomes, most notably through changes in students' attitudes, preferences, and behaviors. Across the reviewed programs, GBV prevention is achieved by increasing students' knowledge and awareness of GBV, by fostering attitudinal changes that encourage students to question traditional gender norms and affective-sexual preferences and reject violence, and particularly, by developing bystander intervention skills. Several programs also report a reduction in experiences of peer violence and adolescent intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, as well as cases where students have ended toxic relationships.

Peer groups, teachers, and other community members are relevant actors in achieving these impacts. They can be recipients of interventions that enhance their knowledge and skills to address SRGBV. At the same time, they can serve active agents of change, promoting shifts in knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behavior among other members of the educational community. In doing so, they help to multiply the potential impact of the interventions and contribute to their sustainability. The impacts observed in the analyzed programs across the reviewed studies were achieved through the participation of one or more of these key actor profiles. This highlights the importance of considering the transformative potential agency of each of these actors against GBV in the school context separately, as well as considering them together to maximize the overall impact of interventions aimed at addressing this problem.

Despite certain limitations, this research synthesis offers sufficient evidence to support the conclusion that interventions based on a whole-school approach, those that promote bystander intervention, provide effective teacher training, and involve active community participation, are among the most effective strategies for addressing the challenge of GBV in the school context. This synthesis can serve as a valuable resource for end-users, specifically students, families, and educational communities, by offering an overview of successful interventions based on scientific research standards and core key characteristics. In doing so, it can guide the design and implementation of effective strategies for preventing and addressing GBV in schools.

Author contributions

SM: Supervision, Investigation, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Conceptualization. TÍ-B: Investigation, Writing – review & editing. AR-D: Writing – review & editing, Investigation. EC-L: Formal analysis, Writing – original draft.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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