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Registered report

Prevention of violence against LGBTIQ+ youth: A systematic review of successful strategies

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ABSTRACT

Discrimination and violence against LGBTIQ+ young people have direct and long-term effects on their health and well-being, with high levels of harassment, marginalisation, violence and, consequently, a higher likelihood of school absenteeism and suicidal thoughts. However, there is little systematisation of data showing which strategies are contributing to the prevention of this situation. The study reviews the scientific literature on the main findings. A systematic review was conducted in scientific databases, 41 studies that showed successful actions to reverse the reality of discrimination and violence against the group were selected. From literature review, it is concluded that interventions focusing on upstander training and community-based actions contribute to reducing bullying, gender-based violence and mitigating its adverse effects on LGBTIQ+ youth's well-being.

1. Introduction

Violence and discrimination against LGBTIQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer and other minority gender identities and sexualities) people have been deeply reported within the past few decades in academic literature (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012; Meyer, 2015; Mitchell, Ybarra & Korchmaros, 2014; Mogul, Ritchie & Whitlock, 2011; Wirtz, Poteat, Malik & Glass, 2020). For instance, Katz-Wise and Hyde (2012) reviewed 137 studies on the field and confirmed that LGBTIQ+ victimization has increased comparing international data from 1992 to 2009. More recently, Wirtz et al. (2020) showed that in United States from 2008 to 2016 the prevalence of gender-based violence towards transgender people ranges from 7 % to 89 % among trans populations and sub-populations. Similarly, according to the European Union poll, the LGBTIQ+ minority has reported experiencing high levels of violence, marginalisation, and harassment (FRA, 2014; FRA, 2020). The FRA (2020) report makes it clear that a comparison of the survey data from 2012 to 2019 demonstrates that LGBTIQ+ people continue to face human rights breaches regularly.

The health and well-being of LGBTIQ+ people are directly and permanently impacted by these phenomena. Some examples of this impact are problems like emotional distress, depressive symptomatology, risk of self-harm, suicidal ideation and anxiety symptom. (Almeida et al., 2009; Bauer et al., 2015; Brennan et al., 2017; Lick, Durso & Johnson, 2013; Mazrekaj, De Witte & Cabus, 2020; Mereish, O' Cleirigh & Bradford, 2014). In this regard, LGBTIQ+ youth report significant rates of harassment and victimisation due to

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damage caused using a weapon (Bouris et al., 2016).

Horton (2023) explored how sexual minorities in educational settings suffer discrimination in educational system, the study highlighted that discrimination and segregation contribute to higher rates of school dropout and trauma among young individuals from sexual minority groups. The lack of protection against harassment and the tolerance of violence creates an unsafe environment that adversely affects the mental and emotional well-being of these students, heightening the risk of disengagement from formal education. Lange, Baams and Bosker (2022), take an additional stride in advancement, showing a clear link between sexual minority stressors and suicidal ideation and suicide attempts among sexual minorities.

Initiatives at the European level have worked to address this issue at the policy level for the past 20 years. For instance, the 2006 European resolution on homophobia (European Parliament, 2006) urged member states to launch campaigns at educational, legislative, and administrative levels against homophobia, particularly in educational centres and the media. In addition, the European Parliament Resolution (2014) 'Roadmap against homophobia and discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity' noted the need for a more concerted and all-encompassing strategy so that member states can guarantee the respect of the rights of LGBTIQ+ people, particularly in the main areas: education, health, and employment.

Independently of these European institutional actions, there is a significant number of literature reviews which explore how different interventions have been approached and designed to combat violence towards LGBTIQ+ people. For instance, Harper and Schneider (2003) revised different actions from Community Psychology which have considered how community-based therapies, which connect LGBTIQ+ individuals with their context, were becoming positive to combat and prevent discrimination. More recently, mental health interventions have also been explored in a systematic review trying to identify their impact on reducing LGBTIQ+ victimization (Coulter et al., 2019). In this regard, this investigation, selecting studies from 2000 to 2019, shed lights on the relevance of community-based health actions and antibullying policies to reduce victimization and suicidal ideation of gender and sexual minorities. From a similar perspective, a review of literature on protective factors to reduce LGBTIQ+ youth suicide has been performed (Gorse, 2022). This review shows how shaping gender and sexuality alliances, LGBTIQ+ inclusive curriculum, LGBTIQ+ affirming school policies, familial support, peer support, and mental health interventions are factors that protect LGBTIQ+ youth of suicidal ideation.

However, despite the above-mentioned findings regarding the reduction of discrimination, there are fewer reviews of interventions focused on education illustrating their social impact on the prevention of LGBTIQ+ violence. Thus, several authors highlighted the worrying situation in that field, as these are often breeding grounds for the kind of bullying and sexual harassment experienced by LGBTIQ+ people (Juvonen & Graham, 2014; Kosciw et al., 2013; Olsen et al., 2014). The scientific literature demonstrates that to stop the spread of marginalisation, the issue of homophobic bullying and cyberbullying in educational settings and youth organisations needs to be addressed as soon as possible (Elipe, de la Oliva Muoz & Del Rey, 2018; Rodríguez-Hidalgo & Hurtado-Mellado, 2019). Another critical piece of evidence is the association between higher rates of suicidality among LGBTIQ+ children and factors such as a hostile educational environment, a lack of a social support system, and the absence of LGBTIQ+ movements in the community (Poštuvan et al., 2019). The studies mentioned here and in the first paragraph demonstrate that homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia among LGBTIQ+ people are still persistent.

Nevertheless, research has shown that encouraging young people to support the LGBTIQ+ community in educational settings when harassment or violence occurs can be a valuable counter-strategy for reducing these harmful effects (Della Cioppa, O'Neil & Craig, 2015; Dessel, Goodman & Woodford, 2017; Villarejo-Carballido et al., 2019). The purpose of this article is to perform a thorough assessment of the literature on the most recent developments in 'upstander' and community-based interventions, where subjects intervene as active participants in instances of violence against LGBTIQ+ as well as gender-based violence rather than remain passive bystanders. We draw on the conceptualization upstander pay attention on the ability of bystanders to be active and intervene in front of violence once it becomes necessary, so the protection of the victim is prioritized (Beer, Hawkins, Hewitson & Hallett, 2019). We also consider social impact as a theoretical basis of the analysis, starting from the definition that European Commission (2018) established in its report on *Monitoring the impact of EU Framework Programmes*:

The social impact of research and innovation activities is the contribution of research and innovation activities to social impact (...). If social impact is not research-based, then it includes all actions, programmes and so on that have had positive effects on those SDG they respond to (p. 43)

Consequently, the main criterion for selecting programs in the systematic review will be 'impact on society': when the published and disseminated research results, which have been transferred, lead to an improvement [of society] about the goals agreed in our societies (through our political representatives)' (IMPACT-EV project, 2015).

2. Methodology

The systematic review in this study was carried out using the recommendations of PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses), as detailed by Moher et al. (2009). This literature review aimed to gather data on the social impact that, as it has been mentioned in the introduction, is understood in terms of achieving improvements according to international targets and objectives; such as the target 16.2 of the Global Development Goals which refers to the end of all forms of violence against children (European Commission, 2018). So, analysis was focused on identifying programs based on upstander interventions and community-based actions that aspire to prevent, lessen, or end violence against LGBTIQ+ young populations. Therefore, the research question which guided the systematic review was: Do upstander and community-based interventions successfully prevent and reduce violence towards LGTBIQ+ youth in educational contexts.

2.1. Search procedure

From December 2020 to March 2021, a systematic review was conducted in the Web of Science and Scopus databases. These two databases were concurrently, focusing on the time frame from January 2009 to December 2020. Only studies within this specific period were chosen. Both elements and agreed by the UP4Diversity's consortium because they were more familiar with their use. A total of 17 keywords were used to filter the search results: LGBT (LGBTI, LGBTIQ, LGBT+) violence, LGBT (LGBTI, LGBTIQ, LGBT+) bullying, homophobia, prejudice, transphobia, heterosexism, homophobic violence, homophobic bullying, homophobic discrimination, youth, students, high school, secondary school, pupil, intervention, Upstander and bystander. These keywords were selected following one of the objectives established in the UP4Diversity project: "a literature review will be carried out in order to increase knowledge about initiatives to overcome violence against LGBTIQ, emphasizing those that are based on upstander approach". After a theoretical discussion among the members of the consortium, the abovementioned keywords were agreed considering the social impact approach that the UP4Diversity project took into account. This approach is framed on the indicators of social impact established by the European Commission which should follow the projects funded by the European research programmes (van den Besselaar, Flecha & Radauer, 2018). In this regard, we paid attention on keywords that appear in articles in Web of Science and SCOPUS in a preliminary and exploratory research that we conducted. This preliminary exploration was conducted by each partner of the project involved in the literature review.

Keywords were divided in three main subgroups: (1) keywords related to violence towards LGBTIQ+ (LGBT (LGBTI, LGBTIQ, LGBT+) violence, LGBT (LGBTI, LGBTIQ, LGBT+) bullying, homophobia, prejudice, transphobia, heterosexism, homophobic violence, homophobic bullying, homophobic discrimination); (2) keywords connected to the target-group of our study (youth, students, high school, secondary school, pupil) and (3) keywords linked to interventions to prevent bullying, prioritizing these ones framed on the upstander approach (intervention, Upstander and active bystander). Therefore, these 17 keywords were combined with the Boolean operator AND considering these three dimensions at the same time. In other words, we employed at least one keyword of each dimension in each search reaching over 500 articles.

According with the purpose of the project, the target group which addresses our research was youth. Thus, we reached a consensus to draw on the age cohort established by the European Commission in its definition in the Eurostat portal: from 15 to 29 years-old. For this reason, programmes and initiatives of high schools and university were included in the analysis. Several projects which unite primary and secondary schools were also taken into account. No distinction between private and public organizations were established.

This preliminary stage was followed by another sorting of the results based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria considered were the following: empirical studies, analysis of changes in prevalence, attitudes and perceptions of LGBTIQ+ violence/discriminations based on upstander/bystander intervention. Therefore, the exploitation and filtering of the articles were directly carried out by them to respond to the objective to prepare the deliverable on literature review which was approved by the European Commission.

The range of inclusion criteria were considered beyond being exclusively directed to the LGBTIQ+ community because the objective of the systematic review was also to obtain scientific knowledge linked to social impact on overcoming violence that is being or can be transferred to improve the vulnerable situation of LGBTIQ+ youth. The exclusion criteria were: exclusively methodological articles that only present data collection instruments, theoretical articles and literature reviews (except for those studies that analyse the impact of upstander intervention in LGBTIQ+ youth), and articles were not focussed to obtain social impact or recommend actions to reach this impact.

41 Articles published from 2009 to 2020 were selected for the fulfilment of the systematic review with the objective to identify most updated investigation on the field of violence towards LGBTIQ+, upstander-intervention and community-based actions with impact of bullying and violence prevention. However, some exceptions to this range of years have been considered for this article to complement the information gathered in the 41 articles. Accordingly, we have included books, international reports and articles of relevance to the subject matter or highly cited in the field of study, although they have not recorded in the PRISMA procedure.

Lastly, we would like to clarify that articles focused on interventions for prevention of gender-based violence towards women have been also included in the analysis because of four reasons agreed with the research team during the inductive design of analytical categories which later will be more detailed: (1) because they also provided data on the effects on LGBTIQ+ people, (2) because they included a broad perspective of gender-based violence beyond violence against women, (3) because they addressed the age target we were working with, and (4) because they responded to the logic of social impact.

2.2. Data analysis

The search described above yielded a total of 41 articles and. The majority of the articles (39) were specific case studies carried out in different countries around the world (20 in the United States of America (USA), 10 in Spain, 4 in Belgium, 1 in Germany, 1 in Italy, 1 in Portugal, 1 in Canada and 1 in Mexico). The other two were literature reviews. The predominance of experimental case studies is due to the nature of the studies that are mainly evaluations of interventions aimed at violence prevention. As this was one of the objectives of the project and of the literature review, it has been validated for inclusion in this article, considering the existence of methodological limitations of this analysis which have been described in the discussion section.

Each article was codified on a table that included 5 columns: Reference, Country, Characteristics of the Upstander Intervention, Context of Implementation and Impacts obtained. [Table 1](#).

As it was previously mentioned, the selection of articles was framed on the data they gathered concerning the social impact

achieved in terms of social transformation and reversing situations of violence. More specific details about the data collection process and the analysis are showed in the Fig. 1, inspired by the guidelines established by PRISMA (2023).

Lastly, for the design of the categories of analysis an inductive strategy was followed which contributed to establish three different typologies aimed at responding to the objective of the UP4Diversity project which was to identify upstander actions obtaining social impact: (1) studies which show the social impact achieved by upstander interventions and community-based actions that prevent bullying at a general level, (2) upstander interventions and community actions that prevent gender-based violence and (3) upstander interventions and community-based actions specifically addressing bullying towards LGBTIQ+. The second category was included in the final analysis because of four reasons which have been explained in Section 2.1. of this article.

3. Results

The literature review confirmed that homophobic bullying and harassment of LGBTIQ+ youth is a daily and widespread occurrence throughout the world, it affects individuals regardless of class or social status, and has a detrimental and long-term impact on well-being and health (Almeida et al., 2009; Kosciw et al., 2012; Toomey et al., 2013). At the same time, articles showed how anti-bullying initiatives that educate ‘upstanders’ and promote community-based actions are crucial interventions in reducing bullying and its negative impacts (Caravita, Di Blasio & Salmivalli, 2009; Salmivalli, Voeten & Poskiparta, 2011). Three different sections are established following the analytical categories designed and explained in Section 2.2.

Before presenting the results of these three sub-sections, it is important to clarify that the scientific literature generally uses the term ‘bystander’ to refer to people who observe harassment, bullying and other acts of violence but do not act on the situation (Beer et al., 2019; Graeff, 2014). In some cases, the term ‘active bystanders’ is used to describe those who choose to intervene in violent situations to support the victims (Olweus & Limber, 2010). In this article, we opt for the term ‘upstander’ instead of ‘active bystander’ for the following reasons: first, to bestow a more positive connotation; second, to distinguish it more clearly from the term ‘bystander;’ and third, to avoid confusion given that there are cases of ‘active bystanders’ who aid the aggressor (Shultz, Heilman & Hart, 2014).

3.1. Successful upstander interventions from the literature on bullying

The upstander interventions presented in this section are based on the wide literature on bullying, which took off in the 1990s through research that offered insights into the interpersonal dynamics of this phenomenon (Olweus, 1994; Rigby, 2002; Sharp & Smith, 2002). The research provides helpful resources and valuable suggestions for anti-bullying and anti-violence strategies in schools, particularly concerning the upstander intervention and community-based models. There is currently research showing evidence that the upstander approach is working to protect LGBTIQ+ people, for example. Some of the successful upstander programs which we have identified in terms of their social impact are the following:

- SAVE Model

The SAVE Model is an intervention designed to help educational community develop their own intervention plans and raise awareness through seminars (Ortega, Del Rey & Mora-Merchán, 2004). Pre-training and post-training evaluations were conducted to collect student’s perception on the effects of this program. Results were compared with control schools. Three single schools of primary and two of secondary were selected for the implementation of the study. On the other hand, four control schools, two of primary and two of secondary, were also chosen. These schools were located in urban and rural contexts of Sevilla and its province in Andalusia, in the south of Spain.

This program is focused on the training in the democratic management of social relations. The research shows that one positive strategies for preventing bullying is training for direct intervention with victims. These interventions are based on six evidence-based programmes such as Quality circles (Sharp, Cowie & Smith, 1994), conflict mediation (Fernández, 1998), peer support (Cowie & Wallace, 1998), Pikas Method (Pikas,1989), assertiveness training (Ortega, 1998), and empathy training (Ortega, 1998). Contrarily, Direct bullying intervention tactics and cooperative group work received less favourable reviews. The first ones are characterized by

Table 1
Exploitation table for literature review (sample).

Reference	Country	Characteristics of the Upstander Intervention	Context of implementation (and details of the sample)	Impacts achieved
Coker, Bush, Clear, Brancato, and McCauley (2020). Bystander program effectiveness to reduce violence and violence acceptance within sexual minority male and female high school students using a cluster RCT. <i>Prevention science</i> , 21 (3), 434-444.	USA	Educators provided school-wide Green Dot presentations (phase 1) and intensive bystander training to student popular opinion leaders (phase 2). Each spring from 2010 to 2014, students completed anonymous surveys about violence acceptance and violent events. Etc.	26 Kentucky high schools 74,836 surveys over the 5 years All students (grades 9–12) who could provide consent were invited University of Kentucky IRB approved the study protocol. Each year letters describing the study were mailed to the parents of all students.	Significant declines in sexual violence acceptance over time (Table 2, mean school-level IRMA scores) were observed in the sexual majority male subgroup (CxT; $p = .02$), sexual majority females (CxT; $p = .004$), and sexual minority female subgroup (CxT; $p = .03$). Etc.

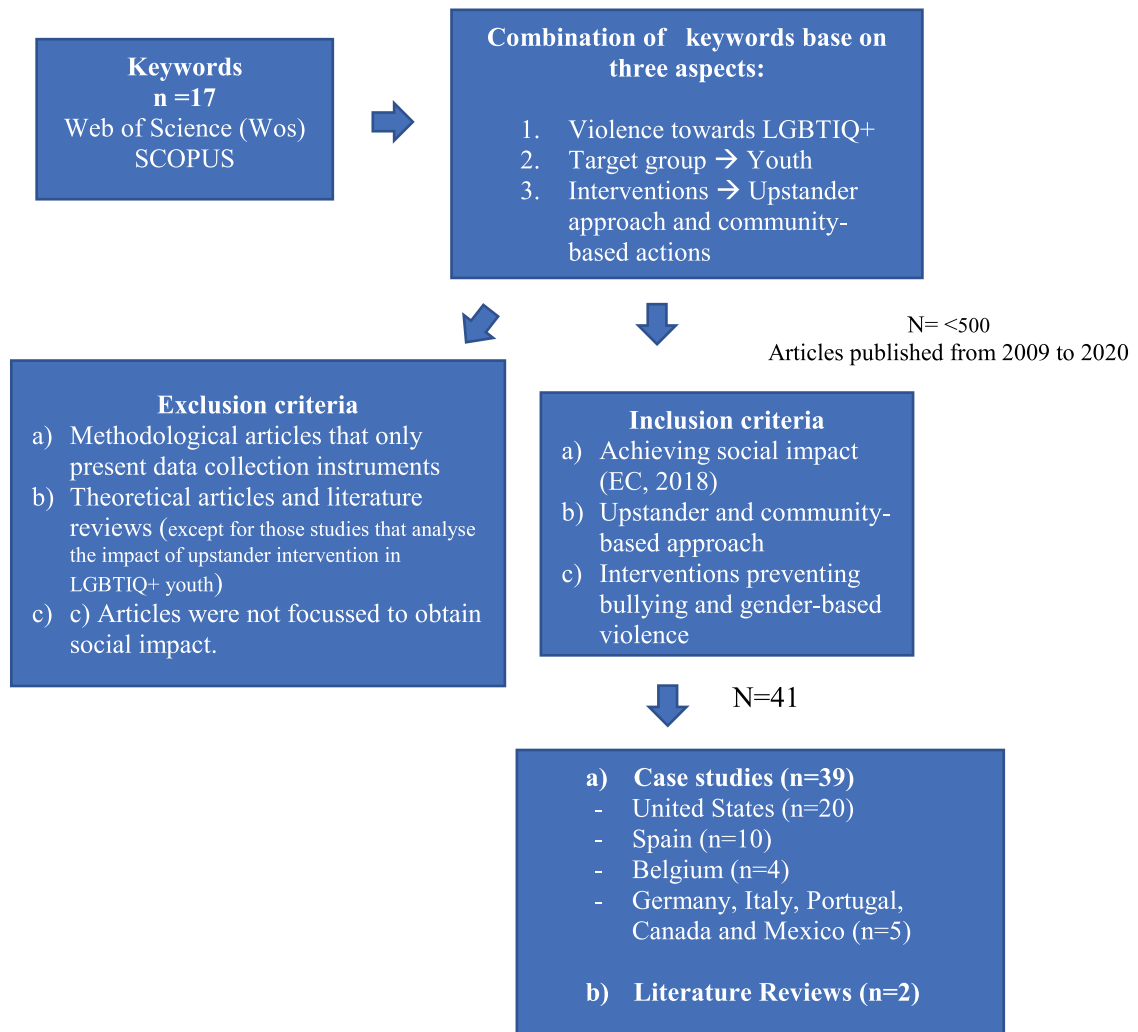


Fig. 1. PRISMA diagram.

supporting programmes where peers have the responsibility of solving conflictive situations themselves. In addition, these direct interventions also promote activate restorative actions addressed to victims aimed at improving their damaged-self-esteem. In regards to cooperative work, these actions consist on activities which imply an overall communication process where teaching and learning process is a common task.

The findings report referring to the analysis of the pre-test data in the experimental schools after 4 years show significant changes in students' perceptions about bullying. For instance, pupils affirmed that the number of victims decreased [from 9.1 % ($N = 83$) to 3.9 % ($N = 35$)], also the number of bullies [from 4.5 % ($N = 41$) to 3.8 % ($N = 34$)] and/or both [from 0.7 % ($N = 6$) to 0.3 % ($N = 3$)]. The SAVE model intervention also increased the number of upstanders [from 85.7 % ($N = 780$) to 92.1 % ($N = 838$)]. The desire to intimidate others and the sensation of solitude and silence were also diminished. According to students' perception, the intervention improved the vision that bystanders would view the bully's actions as problematic and enhanced student relationships and happiness with the school environment. Therefore, they felt school had become safer noticing bullying incidents had drastically decreased by the time the intervention was over. The data from this programme display a positive trend but its analysis is limited to students' perceptions. More objective data and information from other informants would be needed to ensure greater robustness.

- The Improvement of Coexistence and Communicative Competence (ICCC) model

To promote positive school cohabitation through verbal and non-verbal interactions, ICCC uses communicative and other pertinent activities that raise students' self-esteem and empathy (González-Alonso, Guillén-Gámez & de Castro-Hernández 2020). The main objective is to help students improve their communication and civic learning skills. It is centred on the diversity of the children and is founded on the teaching of values like tolerance, equality, respect, and empathy. Another central aspect of the ICCC model is that it also educates students on how bullying involves everyone, not just the victim and the perpetrator, therefore, noting the importance of

intervening as an upstander.

The methodology used to evaluate the program was quasi-experimental (pre- and post-test), developed between 2017 and 2018, and looked at 55 Spanish students' perceptions of bullying and conflict intensity. Results indicated that students' perceptions of bullying dominance were lessened due to ICCC model activities. Furthermore, it led to less tension in the classroom and improved interactions between students. Results also indicated that the program should be implemented from the early years of school to have an impact develop pupils' social and school-related skills.

- Dialogic Model of Prevention and Resolution of Conflicts (DMPRC)

The DMPRC is based on the preventive socialisation of gender violence (Gómez, 2015). The preventive socialization of gender violence is a theoretical approach which deepens, from an interdisciplinary perspective, on the social nature of violence perpetration. Its explanation, grounded in qualitative and quantitative data from twenty years of competitive research, is framed on the reproduction of a so-called coercive dominant discourse which links violence with desire influencing people's affective and sexual relationships (Puigvert, Gelsthorpe, Soler-Gallart & Flecha, 2019). This theory is a central element on DMPRC because helps to understand how socialization is shaped and how to face this coercive dominant discourse through alternative interactions and dialogues.

According with the existing data on DMPRC, this model creates a safe environment through relationships based on the principles of the dialogic learning, an educational theory which puts egalitarian dialogue and solidarity in the forefront to improve learning and coexistence in school setting (Flecha, 2000; Duque, Carbonell, De Botton & Roca-Campos, 2021). In the DMPRC students can interact effectively to prevent bullying and violence of any kind, as well as to create a coexistence agreement that will serve as a guide for the community. In this regard, Villarejo-Carballido et al. (2019) carried out a case study in an urban school of Catalonia which were implementing DMPRC since 2014–2015 showing the impact of this program. This case study was based on three research techniques: a documentary exploration of the data related to the implementation of the programme, six communicative observations in the coexistence commission of the school and four in-depth interviews with members of the educational community involved in the follow-up of cyberbullying cases. The qualitative data illustrated the relevance of taking specific actions to prevent bullying such as: (a) creating trusted environments where the whole community, including families, participated in spaces where rules about coexistence were discussed; (b) promoting bystanders who report bullies and protect jointly victims at any conflictive situation. Therefore, DMPRC offered students the power to speak out about bullying, which helped shatter the silence around it. Further longitudinal research on the quality of virtual and face-to-face interactions will enrich the significative steps already identified in this study.

As highlighted by Roca-Campos et al. (2021), actions that promote zero violence prevent and respond to bullying. They conducted research about the Zero Violence Brave Club action collecting data on its impact in seven schools located in urban and rural areas of Valencia, Spain. Reflections of 10 teachers from semi-structured interviews were registered and transcribed. Results of the study concluded that Zero Violence Brave Club is (a) breaking the silence about violence in different spaces of the school, (b) is promoting a climate of friendship among students, (c) is making violence less attractive in the community and (d) is improving pupils' mental health and psychological well-being. Children's and families' perceptions will complement this approach in the ongoing research lead by García-Yeste where observations and semi-structured interviews with both agents will be conducted (2023–2025).

Lastly, it is also important to note that, according to the last analyses on DMPRC, this is an intervention with a significant impact on LGBTIQ+ students reducing their victimization and re-victimization after their implementation, mainly thanks to the active solidarity with victims and the active role of upstanders (Flecha, Puigvert & Racionero-Plaza, 2023).

3.2. Successful upstander interventions from the literature on gender-based violence

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (A/RES/48/104) was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1993 after it was acknowledged as a significant issue in societies worldwide (United Nations, 2021). Nowadays, it has already been detected that gender-based violence affects women and sexist attitudes are also often related to homophobia and transphobia, thus exerting violence towards LGBTIQ+ people (Pharr, 1997). Research on gender-based violence has revealed that many instances of bullying, harassment, and abuse in educational settings are caused by heteronormative conceptions of gender (Messerschmidt, 2012; Meyer, 2015; Wickens & Sandlin, 2010). In this section, data on this regard will be presented paying attention on how upstander intervention and community actions are reducing violence against young women but also to LGBTIQ+ community. More detailed argumentation is developed in Section 2.1 of this article.

- Green Dot Programme

At the University of Kentucky, the Green Dot programme was launched in 2006 to prevent sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking (Coker et al., 2011). Since then, it has undergone thorough reviews and evaluations (Coker et al., 2011; Coker et al., 2016; Coker et al., 2017). Interpersonal violence, unwanted sexual victimisation, sexual harassment, stalking, and psychological dating violence victimisation and perpetration were all reduced due to the Green Dot programme (Coker et al., 2016; Coker et al., 2017). This program is grounded in the design of different training modules addressed to educate upstanders to act in front of any situation of violence. These modules aim to help bystanders to acquire skills and strategies to combat violent behaviours and change school or university climate. One of the most renown strategy of Green Dot Program is this focused on the definition of 3 Ds: direct, distract, and delegate. These 3 Ds are forms of face and act when violence is witnessed.

More precisely, Coker et al. (2016) examined the relationship between having received Green Dot upstander behaviour training

and reporting behaviour that helped intervene in victimisation scenarios using a cross-sectional survey of a random sample of 7945 college undergraduates. A total of 89,707 students participated in the survey as part of the Coker et al. (2017) approach, which collected data from Kentucky high schools where students were randomly assigned to intervention or control (waitlist) conditions.

To assess the change in these views, the program evaluation used various scales to measure university students' acceptance of violence (for instance, the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMA) and the Acceptance of General Dating Violence Scale). According to Coker et al. (2011), taught students showed less acceptance of the rape myth, understood as cultural beliefs thought to support and perpetuate sexual violence. Researchers discovered that campuses where the programme was administered reported decreased violence victimisation rates by the students attending the intervention compared to comparable campuses (17 % lower), according to another evaluation of Green Dot (Coker et al. 2016). As with unwanted sexual victimisation, sexual harassment, stalking, and psychological dating violence victimisation and perpetration, violence rates were lower on the intervention campuses than on the comparison campuses. The program's upstander rates are generally much higher than the control group. In the same line, there is recent research which sheds light on its impact on sexual minorities. Thus, Green Dot's intervention is being useful for sexual minority males and females who are revealing more frequently the perpetration of sexual violence, harassment, stalking, dating violence victimization and reproductive coercion (Coker et al., 2020).

- Community Responsibility model

Banyard, Moynihan and Plante (2007) analysed a programme based on the community of responsibility model for preventing sexual violence that teaches people how to intervene safely and effectively during, before, and after a case of sexual violence involving a known or an unknown person. The program treats people as rather prospective onlookers or witnesses to actions associated with this sort of violence. The programme includes discussions on how community members can play a central role as upstanders when noticing unsafe situations, both before and during acts of sexual assault, as well as facts regarding the occurrence, causes, and effects of sexual violence. It also addresses the issue of what to say when a peer confides in you being a victim.

About the methodology undertaken, the study had a treatment and a control group. Thus, the treatment was framed on the implementation of the abovementioned programme that was administered in single-sex groups formed by undergraduate students between the ages of 18 and 23 and who had never been trained as a sexual violence advocate at the university. The number of participants in the study were 389 students – 217 women and 172 men - who filled the pre-test questionnaire, and 363 students who filled the post-test - including 165 male and 198 females. Participants in the control group did not receive the prevention program although they filled pre-test questionnaire and two weeks later, they completed it again.

Results from questionnaires show that participants in the programme indicated improvements in their prosocial upstander attitudes, knowledge, efficacy, and self-reported bystander behaviours. They also reported an improvement in their helping mood. In addition, rape myth acceptance was lower among students in the experimental group. The reported upstander behaviour increased between the pre-test and two months later, according to follow-up paired sample *t*-tests. In contrast to an earlier study, large impact sizes were discovered for men and women.

- Poster Campaigns

The study carried out by Potter et al. (2009) has assessed, through an ecological approach, whether a poster campaign enhanced viewers' awareness of good bystander behaviour and their motivation to step in during a sexual assault situation. This study was conducted in a mid-sized public north-eastern university at United States of America aimed at collecting students' opinions about four posters describing typical campus scenarios and explicitly model preventive bystander behaviours. Posters were created considering previous research on the relevance of promoting upstander behaviours.

To educate the public and dispel rape myths, a media campaign on sexual and intimate partner violence was also created. The campaign's main message stated everyone could help prevent sexual assault. The campaign was evaluated through a pilot study which was based on the celebration of three sessions of focus groups involving faculty, staff and students. Participants in these sessions were asked about media campaign prototypes in order to collect their feedback. These feedback was particularly important in students' case because it was employed to construct the final campaign materials (Potter et al., 2008).

Similarly, Potter et al. (2011) deepens on the effects of these posters which were mainly exhibited in residence halls, fraternities, campus recreation facilities, student centres and dining halls. After a period of 4-week poster display, students accessed to university's homepage portal and had the opportunity to fill a community survey related to posters' content. Three hundred and seventy-two students completed the online survey, being 62 % female, 27 % were 1st-year students, 87 % were white and 28 % lived off-campus. Twenty-eight percent of students stated participating in a program centred on the prevention of violence. Findings illustrate the influence of poster in students' perception mainly affirming that they were familiar with the situation which appear in posters. Thus, students who are familiar with that content were more confident to specify that they had intervened in a similar way to those portrayed in the poster.

3.3. Successful upstander interventions related to the LGBTIQ+ community

Drawing on the existing data on school violence towards LGBTIQ+ community and recommendations from international organizations on the field, strengthening inclusive education, promoting visibility of LGBTIQ+ people and implementing community approach to establish a safer environment are necessary (FRA, 2020; IGLYO, 2022). The following results show significant findings of

the literature on upstander interventions involving the LGBTIQ+ community. To this end, three specific sections on relevant community and upstander issues have been created framed on evidence from studies targeting the LGBTIQ+ community: community interventions and inclusive educational environments, LGBTIQ+ safe spaces are related to fewer reported bullying incidents, and upstander programs need to engage with gender and transgender issues

- *Community interventions and inclusive educational environments.*

Youth who identify as LGBTIQ+ frequently face safety concerns. According to the research, safety increases when a programme fosters a community-wide, inclusive environment. For instance, Domínguez-Martínez and Robles (2019) in their review of international interventions and programmes that concentrated on structural changes shed light on the need to reduce violence against transgender individuals. On the other hand, Sánchez and Teixidó (2016) carried out a systematic review on the role of school organization to prevent violence and pointed out that recognition, awareness, and training are important for LGBTIQ+ bullying prevention. They emphasise that anti-bullying programs need to address specific issues of gender-based violence and LGTBphobia. The above-mentioned research also highlights the need to include scientific evidence for the effectiveness of these interventions. Additionally, it discusses the importance of a democratic approach in schools as a preventive element, particularly the adoption of a dialogic conflict resolution model built on the egalitarian discussion. Flecha, Puigvert and Racionero (2023), who examined the efficacy of preventive programmes involving an upstander role, further supported the significance of a dialogic and community approach and their preventive effects. According to the findings, applying the dialogic model of conflict prevention is successful in reduce violence towards specific groups such as LGBTIQ+ students. In particular, students assist the victims more, the community has a zero-tolerance attitude against violence, and children appear to be more secure in their ability to reject violence. The reason this model has so far been adopted by schools in Spain, Europe, and Latin America is because of its beneficial effects in reducing violence, creating safe places, and improving relationships (Soler-Gallart & Rodrigues de Mello, 2020).

- *LGBTIQ+ safe spaces and SOGI-related policies*

Through the school policies and practices focused on sexual orientation and gender identity, so-called SOGI-related policies, students can examine their views and values around gender and sexual identity. These policies increased in the last decades across the world aimed at responding the documented problem of bullying and unsafety schools for LGBTIQ+ pupils. Drawing on the research on the impact of this typology of policies, it shows lower rates of bullying when they are properly implemented by national governments (Kosciw, Greytak, Palmer & Boesen, 2014).

From a closer perspective, another analysis of SOGI policies found a link between having an LGBTIQ+ safe place and fewer reported bullying events (Russell et al., 2016). These findings highlight the significance of having safe areas in schools. In addition, they also imply that the inclusion of many regulations may have a more significant impact than any single policy. Other studies show how SOGI-focused policies and practices foster positive learning environments for all students (Kosciw et al., 2014; O'Shaughnessy et al., 2004). According to research, these regulations affect all students, not only the LGBTIQ+ ones (Poteat et al., 2013; Poteat et al., 2014).

A review of the Finnish KiVA anti-bullying programme (Granero Andjar & Manzano León, 2018) confirms the abovementioned findings. The review discovers that the KiVA programme significantly decreased bullying and school violence that was homophobic and transphobic. This statement comes from a systematic review on research which examines the impact of the programme which started on 2006 in Finland and was lately transferred to other countries: Netherlands, United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Italy, Estonia, Sweden and United States of America. In the study, 39 theoretical and empirical research articles, the KiVA's programme website, 2 doctoral theses, 2 reports, 2 guides, 2 media articles and 10 book chapters were evaluated. Effective strategies against LGBTIQ+-based bullying from scientific studies frequently share KiVa components.

McMahon, Burnham and Banyard (2020) investigated bystander interventions on campus linked to sexual violence, dating violence, and other types of damage from racialised and/or LGBTIQ+ university students' perspectives. This study was conducted in a large and public university of the mid-Atlantic in three different Campus totalling 60.000 students. An exploratory analysis regarding bystander intervention focused on the perspectives of 101 racialized and/or LGBTIQ+ students was carried out. The findings imply that bystander intervention initiatives must take intersectionality and social justice issues. The capacity of the participants to recognise different types of discrimination resulted from on-campus bystander interventions. Students emphasised the connections between their identities and their ability to participate actively as upstanders on college campuses.

- *Upstander programs need to engage with gender and transgender issues*

In a recent study, Gorrotxategi et al. (2020) examined the interactive training programme 'Creative Factory', which focuses on gender and transgender learning. The researchers investigated on the knowledge and attitudes toward transgender issues on 64 students of Social Education degree in the University of Basque Country, Spain. They employed the Short Form of the Genderism and Transphobia Scale, a 12-item scale of transphobia and gender ideology variables. Findings show that the curriculum improved the understanding and attitudes of Social Education students about any sort of gender. That would imply that courses like that could help students become resolute in defining violence prevention strategies. This methodology's primary objective is to provide students with the tools to assess social reality and spark dialogue. Bas-Peña, Pérez-de-Guzmán and Vargas (2014) and Parcerisa-Aran and Forés (2003) carried out both studies framed on the content analysis of syllabus in the social education degree of public and private Spanish Universities. They revealed, along the same lines as the previous studies, that training on transgender issues improves knowledge and

attitudes towards the group. Therefore, the importance of training courses on gender and transsexuality is underlined so that professionals have more tools to know how to act in the different environments in which they find themselves (Bas-Peña, Pérez-de-Guzmán & Vargas, 2014; Parcerisa-Aran & Forés, 2003).

4. Discussion and conclusions

According to the research, the upstander interventions are getting positive results for addressing violence and harassment against the LGBTIQ+ community, but also to other vulnerable groups such as women who suffer gender-based violence. In relation to the findings of the studies presented in this article, upstander actions are demonstrating that can contribute to improve the school climate and atmosphere. However, this field of study is still growing and more research needs to be conducted to reach conclusive guidelines regarding the most effective approaches in upstander training against LGBTIQ+ violence. In this regard, it is important to note some limitations which were also identified throughout the whole systematic review process. One of the limitations concerns to the nature of the research evaluated. Most of the assessments of the described programmes and educational actions are directly connected with children's or students' perceptions. This means that the information provided is highly subjective, therefore more objective data would be necessary for widening the analysis of their impact. Similarly, most of the studies presented in the article have a methodological restriction which should also be considered. This restriction concerns the non-inclusion of control groups or longitudinal studies in their analytical procedure that limit the possibility of more in-depth comparisons of the impact of the above-mentioned programmes.

To conclude and synthesise the main contributions of this systematic review, common elements which coincide in the review of programmes and interventions will be analysed more in detail. Firstly, it is usually shared in anti-bullying programmes include strategies that informs students about the difficulties faced by victims of violence and bullying. Thus, student response suggests that integrating upstander behaviour models, which encourage participants to consider their active role to intervene in these circumstances, is an effective strategy (Katz & Moore, 2013). In other words, for participants to envision how they would react in the event of violence against LGBTIQ+ people, programmes must allow them to plan, conceive, and practise their course of action (Farley, Gallagher & Richardson Bruna, 2020).

Secondly, a barrier which emerge in the programmes examined is how to combine actions to train people about denouncing bullying by considering its negative effects on terms of possible reprisals, lack of solidarity or individualism (Katz & Moore, 2013). Thus, the relevance on how to teach empathy and solidarity become a central point. Findings illustrate that encouraging upstanders to develop pedagogically the concepts of solidarity, friendship, empathy, and the behaviours that accompany them is becoming a successful intervention to prevent bullying (Caravita, Di Blasio & Salmivalli, 2009; Nickerson, Aloe & Werth, 2015; Zych et al., 2019).

Thirdly, research demonstrates that in schools there is a normalization of norms and attitudes that support and justify violence against the LGBTIQ+ community. Evaluated programmes show how helpful is to involve community associated with the educational institution, such as students, teachers, and families, to face this normalization. According to the community approach, everyone in the community is seen as having a significant impact on reducing bullying situations (Banyard et al., 2007). Additionally, it suggests that family participation in the instruction processes is being also useful in bullying prevention (DeSmet et al., 2014). When this community-based strategy concerns of solidarity and support among all the community is also fruitful in terms of a better school climate (Sánchez & Teixidó, 2016). More significantly, analyses on community-wide interventions emphasise that bullying is a structural problem that demands everyone's involvement and action and moves beyond the notion that bullying and violence are interpersonal problems (Farley, Gallagher & Richardson Bruna, 2020). There are studies which pay attention on the community approach that prove the decisive role of creating spaces of dialogue where participants may relate their experiences, validate those of others, and democratically decide how to respond to bullying and harassment (Villarejo-Carballido et al., 2019). Therefore, these spaces give community members a chance to discuss and adopt precise guidelines for what constitutes acceptable conduct. The rules may explicitly rely on a zero-tolerance policy (Villarejo-Carballido et al., 2019). The mapping of explicit norms for one's behaviour or agreements made by students also helps young population understand other people's behaviour and call it out when appropriate (Granero, Andjar & Manzano León, 2018).

Although there is research showing the strength of the upstander approach to tackling LGBTIQ+ bullying, according to the research conducted, there are still future lines of analysis in this area to be explored. For instance, the LGBTIQ+ community's response, representing racial minorities, demonstrates the need for intersectional measures to combat violence and bullying (McMahon, Burnham & Banyard, 2020). Additionally, investigation on upstander training indicates that address the phenomenon of transphobia is become a priority due to the growing evidence that the transgender community is particularly susceptible to violent attacks (Gorrotxategi et al., 2020).

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Miranda Christou: Formal analysis, Investigation, Writing – review & editing. **Regina Gairal-Casadó:** Conceptualization, Writing – original draft. **Sara Carbonell:** Conceptualization, Data curation, Writing – review & editing. **Ana Vidu:** Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Methodology, Writing – original draft.

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