




Interventions and Strategies to Address School Violence in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Region: A Scoping Review



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ABSTRACT

School violence is a global public health issue that has an impact on the well-being of children and teachers and their overall psychosocial experiences. It also affects the children's academic performance and prospects. To address school violence, member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have developed the Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) policy framework, which emphasizes the need for comprehensive approaches at both the school and community levels. Therefore, this current scoping review study aimed to understand the interventions and strategies employed to address school violence in the SADC region. The literature search, conducted on Web of Science, ProQuest, Academic Search Ultimate, Medline Ultimate, PubMed, and PsycINFO, led to the inclusion of 17 articles reporting interventions and strategies used in different schools across the SADC region. The findings were categorised under two themes with subthemes: i) interventions (teacher training on violence management, curriculum-aligned interventions, community-based and peer-driven interventions), ii) strategies (school and teacher-initiated approaches, school policies and codes of conduct, and physical surveillance and security measures). These different interventions and strategies were found to contribute to safer school environments and were aligned with the outlined CSTL approaches. While these interventions and strategies were found to be effective, there exist issues with teachers using corporal or physical punishment to discipline learners, therefore signifying the need for better approaches. The study calls for further research to be conducted on approaches addressing school violence and advocates for the CSTL policy framework to be used as a practice roadmap for schools in the SADC region.

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INTRODUCTION

Schools are generally recognised as safe spaces for children and are crucial for their development, providing them with structured environments for learning, forming bonds with peers, participating in extramural activities, developing critical life skills, and supporting their psychosocial development.¹ However, these are hampered by acts of school violence. Worldwide, school violence is a significant

¹ Mina Fazel, "A Moment of Change: Facilitating Refugee Children's Mental Health in UK Schools," *International Journal of Educational Development* 41 (March 2015): 255–61, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2014.12.006>; Sharon Hoover and Jeff Bostic, "Schools As a Vital Component of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health System," *Psychiatric Services* 72, no. 1 (January 1, 2021): 37–48, <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ps.201900575>.

public health concern, with reports indicating that one out of three children experiences bullying, over 36% of learners experience physical assault, one out of three learners is assaulted at least once a year, and one in ten children is affected by cyberbullying. Lastly, half of the learners between the ages of 6 and 17 years live in countries where corporal punishment has not been entirely banned.² School-going children whose schools have evident challenges with school violence are impacted profoundly by this phenomenon, as their physical and mental health well-being, school attendance, academic performance, and prospects are negatively affected.³ In 2016, around 1 billion children—about 50% of those aged 2 to 17— have experienced some form of violence, such as physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, often worsened by systemic inequalities, economic difficulties, inadequate legal protections, and insufficient capacity to prevent and address these issues effectively.⁴ In the absence of effective strategies to manage disruptive behaviours, teachers resort to using corporal punishment, a kind of school violence that has been banned in many contexts.⁵ With these instances of school violence in mind, school violence prevention programs have been established in many countries to respond to problems contextual to violence.⁶ These violence prevention programs in schools aim to educate learners and staff about violence, change perceptions and emotional responses, and strengthen social and emotional competencies such as communication and empathy, and the ability to problem-solve and resolve conflict.⁷

To address school violence, there is a need for comprehensive approaches that target establishing clear school policies, encouraging teacher capacitation in their methods to manage disruptive behaviours, and creating interventions involving collaborative partnerships between teachers, parents, and social workers providing psychosocial support in schools.⁸ As such, Smarrelli et al. reported that engaging students, families, community members, teachers, and school administrators has proven effective in reducing school-related violence, as demonstrated by successful interventions in developed countries.⁹ Sibisi et al. support the idea of collaboration between organisations and professionals interested in positive school environments, arguing that this would lead to the successful prevention of school violence.¹⁰ Other studies argue for specific school violence-targeted interventions. For instance, Espelage et al. recommend implementing social-emotional learning programs to effectively handle bullying and physical conflicts, emphasising the need for teachers to engage students in activities that develop emotional intelligence, including teacher-led community engagement initiatives that bolster social cohesion and reduce peer violence.¹¹ There is also a need for schools to encourage learners to participate in extracurricular activities, such as sports, which fosters a favorable school climate and

² Kathy Attawell, *Behind the Numbers: Ending School Violence and Bullying* (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2019).

³ Jeffrey R Sprague and Hill M Walker, *Safe and Healthy Schools: Practical Prevention Strategies* (Guilford Publications, 2021); World Health Organization, "School-Based Violence Prevention: A Practical Handbook," Geneva, Switzerland, 2019, 2019, <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/324930>.

⁴ Susan Hillis et al., "Global Prevalence of Past-Year Violence Against Children: A Systematic Review and Minimum Estimates," *Pediatrics* 137, no. 3 (March 1, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2015-4079>.

⁵ Morgan Chitiyo et al., "Understanding the Causes and Management of Problem Behaviour in Zimbabwean Schools: Teacher Perceptions," *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 18, no. 11 (November 2, 2014): 1091–1106, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2013.875068>.

⁶ Matthew J. Mayer, Amanda B. Nickerson, and Shane R. Jimerson, "Preventing School Violence and Promoting School Safety: Contemporary Scholarship Advancing Science, Practice, and Policy," *School Psychology Review* 50, no. 2–3 (July 3, 2021): 131–42, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2372966X.2021.1949933>.

⁷ Charlotte Silke et al., "Activating Social Empathy: An Evaluation of a School-Based Social and Emotional Learning Programme," *Social and Emotional Learning: Research, Practice, and Policy* 3 (June 2024): 100021, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sel.2023.100021>.

⁸ Gift Khumalo, Nosipho Faith Makhakhe, and Bokang Nephtali Lipholo, "A Scoping Review of Contextual Factors Contributing to School Violence in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Region," *Youth* 5, no. 1 (March 14, 2025): 30, <https://doi.org/10.3390/youth5010030>.

⁹ Gabriela Smarrelli et al., *Violence in Schools: Prevalence, Impact, and Interventions* (JSTOR, 2024). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep57631>.

¹⁰ Nomathemba Nomakhosi Sibisi, Nonhle Tracey Sibisi, and Zandile Faith Mpofo, "Preventative Strategies to Curb School Violence: A Case Study of Selected Schools in Hhohho District of Eswatini, Mbabane," *Social Sciences* 13, no. 2 (January 25, 2024): 79, <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci13020079>.

¹¹ Dorothy L. Espelage, Chad A. Rose, and Joshua R. Polanin, "Social-Emotional Learning Program to Reduce Bullying, Fighting, and Victimization Among Middle School Students With Disabilities," *Remedial and Special Education* 36, no. 5 (September 12, 2015): 299–311, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0741932514564564>.

diminishes instances of peer violence.¹² Sanders, Munford, and Liebenberg emphasise the significant roles that teachers have in enhancing resilience and positive outcomes for at-risk learners.¹³ At the same time, De Wet et al. argue that teachers are at the forefront of establishing and ensuring secure social environments in schools.¹⁴ Their role, in some contexts, extends to providing emotional support to learners, which Merrill et al. assert is a major predictor for future school violence prevention.¹⁵ Several other studies argue for the deployment of professionals such as school-based social workers.¹⁶ Further arguing that the inclusion of social work services in the school environment is crucial in lowering school violence, since social workers help learners by offering therapeutic interventions meant to alleviate the trauma caused by tragic experiences. School social workers would be instrumental in understanding the context-specific issues that contribute to instances of school violence and addressing these instances as they occur.¹⁷

This current review is located within the SADC region. Education is highlighted as essential to SADC's development strategy, representing a challenge and offering an opportunity for social and economic advancement in the region.¹⁸ For instance, as a problem, a South African study concluded that learners' educational outcomes were affected by community crime and violence, exposure to alcohol and drug use, domestic violence instances at home, ineffective school leadership, insufficient school resources, and unsafe and unfavourable geographical conditions.¹⁹ While in Zimbabwe, educational challenges include out-of-school children and issues with substance use, among other issues.²⁰ As a region, learners are vulnerable to the consequences of HIV/AIDS and generally face challenges in realising their right to education.²¹ As a response to these educational challenges and to recognise the effects of school violence on learners' scholarly and psychosocial development, SADC developed the Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) policy framework.

According to Van Der Elst et al., the CSTL policy framework emphasizes the need for countries within the SADC to develop policies, build collaborations, and establish coordination systems that facilitate the provision of support and services by key ministries and sectors. Moreover, the implementation of CSTL as a SADC-wide initiative advocates for a holistic strategy for responding to and addressing health and socioeconomic challenges in the education sector, supporting education ministries in the different SADC countries in fulfilling their goals and commitments to provide all children with quality and accessible education. This framework serves as a blueprint for the current study, which focuses on interventions and strategies used to curb school violence in the SADC region, prioritizing the safety and protection of learners and teachers within the school environment. According

¹² Nicole De Wet, Oluwaseyi Somefun, and Ndivhuwo Rambau, "Perceptions of Community Safety and Social Activity Participation among Youth in South Africa," *PLOS ONE* 13, no. 5 (May 18, 2018): e0197549, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0197549>.

¹³ Jackie Sanders, Robyn Munford, and Linda Liebenberg, "The Role of Teachers in Building Resilience of at Risk Youth," *International Journal of Educational Research* 80 (2016): 111–23, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2016.10.002>.

¹⁴ De Wet, Somefun, and Rambau, "Perceptions of Community Safety and Social Activity Participation among Youth in South Africa."

¹⁵ Katherine G. Merrill et al., "Effects of a Violence Prevention Intervention in Schools and Surrounding Communities: Secondary Analysis of a Cluster Randomised-Controlled Trial in Uganda," *Child Abuse & Neglect* 84 (October 2018): 182–95, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.06.007>.

¹⁶ Thulani Andrew Chauke, "Teacher Intervention Strategies on Reducing Youth Violent Behaviour in One Historically Disadvantaged School: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach," *Southern African Journal of Social Work and Social Development* 36, no. 2 (June 26, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.25159/2708-9355/14037>; Edmarie Pretorius, "A Collaborative Partnership Between School Social Workers And Educators: A Vehicle To Address The Social Contexts Of Learners And Quality Of Education In South Africa," *Social Work* 56, no. 2 (June 2020), <https://doi.org/10.15270/56-2-817>.

¹⁷ Khumalo, Makhakhe, and Lipholo, "A Scoping Review of Contextual Factors Contributing to School Violence in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Region"; Pretorius, "A Collaborative Partnership Between School Social Workers And Educators: A Vehicle To Address The Social Contexts Of Learners And Quality Of Education In South Africa."

¹⁸ Lynn Van der Elst et al., "Care and Support for Teaching and Learning: A SADC Response for Ensuring the Education Rights of Vulnerable Children and Youth Are Realized," *Association for the Development of Education in Africa*, 2012, 1–39.

¹⁹ Gift Khumalo and Edmarie Pretorius, "Perceptions of Grade 10 to 12 Adolescents on Contextual Situations That Contribute to Their Psychosocial Development Challenges," *South African Journal of Education* 45, no. 1 (February 28, 2025): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v45n1a2453>.

²⁰ Alison Buckler et al., "Out-of-School Girls' Lives in Zimbabwe: What Can We Learn from a Storytelling Research Approach?," *Cambridge Journal of Education* 52, no. 2 (March 4, 2022): 195–215, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2021.1970718>; Solomon Mukwenha et al., "Increased Illicit Substance Use among Zimbabwean Adolescents and Youths during the COVID-19 Era: An Impending Public Health Disaster," *Addiction* 117, no. 4 (April 15, 2022): 1177–78, <https://doi.org/10.1111/add.15729>.

²¹ Van der Elst et al., "Care and Support for Teaching and Learning: A SADC Response for Ensuring the Education Rights of Vulnerable Children and Youth Are Realized."

to Van Der Elst et al., abuse, bullying, and all kinds of violence should not exist in the school environment, and concerns about safety and protection extend beyond the school’s physical infrastructure to include the psychological and emotional security and well-being of both learners and teachers.²² The framework policy guides cohesive, well-organized, and long-term multi-sectoral efforts to address issues like school violence. It highlights that school violence initiatives may encompass protective measures intended to alleviate vulnerabilities arising from power imbalances among the learners and school administrators, as well as fears of violence and abuse.

The authors contend that, despite the acknowledged ongoing school violence challenges within the SADC region and the implementation of CSTL, substantial issues related to school violence remain. Therefore, it is imperative to examine the interventions and strategies currently implemented across member states to understand their approaches to safeguarding learners and ensuring that SADC schools remain free from violence. Whilst scoping reviews on school violence have been done in other parts of the world, this is the first of its kind to focus on interventions and strategies to curb school violence within the context of SADC. It emphasizes the significance of a rights-based, inclusive, and multi-stakeholder strategy that focuses on the well-being of all learners and teachers. This discussion aims to enhance ongoing efforts to create safer and more equitable educational environments by exploring best practices and lessons from various contexts. In this light, the purpose of the scoping review was to gather existing knowledge and locate trends in interventions and strategies targeting school violence in the SADC region. The research question was: What interventions and strategies are used in the SADC region to address school violence?

METHODOLOGY

To understand the interventions and strategies used to address school violence in the SADC region, a scoping review method was utilised to systematically identify, map, and synthesise existing literature on the current review focus. This provided an overview of the current knowledge on school violence in the SADC region and identified potential knowledge and research gaps on the topic.²³ The researchers drew from the five-stage framework by Arksey and O’Malley to guide the review’s methodological approach. They adhered to the requirements outlined in the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) statement.²⁴ The review was registered with the Open Science Framework and the protocol was published.²⁵

Eligibility Criteria/ Search Strategy

The initial literature search, focusing on the research study, was completed in October 2024. A follow-up search was completed in March 2025 to find any literature that might have emerged during the analysis of the first search. To summarise briefly, the review included only full-text accessible peer-reviewed articles published in the English language between January 2014 and March 2025. The included articles were those that reported on interventions and strategies used to address school violence within SADC’s member states. Based on the Problem, Interest, and Context (PICo) framework, a comprehensive search was completed on Academic Search Ultimate, ProQuest, Web of Science, Medline Ultimate, PubMed, and PsycINFO. The search categories used are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: PICo framework and search terms

PICo Framework	Search terms
P = Problem	(“school violence” OR “school bullying” OR “school aggression”),

²² Van der Elst et al., “Care and Support for Teaching and Learning: A SADC Response for Ensuring the Education Rights of Vulnerable Children and Youth Are Realized.”

²³ Siti Nurma Hanim Hadie, “ABC of a Scoping Review: A Simplified JBI Scoping Review Guideline,” *Education in Medicine Journal* 16, no. 2 (June 28, 2024): 185–97, <https://doi.org/10.21315/eimj2024.16.2.14>.

²⁴ Hilary Arksey and Lisa O’Malley, “Scoping Studies: Towards a Methodological Framework,” *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 8, no. 1 (February 2005): 19–32, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1364557032000119616>.

²⁵ Khumalo, Makhakhe, and Lipholo, “A Scoping Review of Contextual Factors Contributing to School Violence in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Region.”

I = Interest	(“prevention” OR “preventive measures” OR “intervention” OR “interventions and strategies”)
Co = Context	(“Southern African Development Community” OR “SADC” OR “Angola” OR “Botswana” OR “Comoros” OR “Democratic Republic of Congo” OR “DRC” OR “Eswatini” OR “Lesotho” OR “Madagascar” OR “Malawi” OR “Mauritius” OR “Mozambique” OR “Namibia” OR “Seychelles” OR “South Africa” OR “Tanzania” OR “Zambia” OR “Zimbabwe”)

Data Extraction and Analysis

Each database's citations were downloaded and then entered into Rayyan, a web-based program that facilitates screening publications and automatically eliminates duplicates. The selection of relevant articles was completed independently by the first two authors, first through title and abstract screening and then through full-text screening. Any conflicts and discrepancies noted from the selected articles between the two authors were reviewed and resolved by the third author. Additional articles were identified in the final full-text articles' reference list. Details about the final included articles that reported interventions and strategies used to address school violence were charted on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The details (Appendix A) included: i) author/s (date), ii) aim/ objective, iii) country, iv) methods, v) sample/ participants, vi) interventions/ strategies used. Following the charting of the interventions and strategies reported in each article, the authors conducted a thematic analysis of the qualitative data and synthesized and recorded the quantitative data.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The article identification and selection process results are described in the PRISMA chart (Figure 1). The search algorithm through the databases identified 3364 articles, and 12 additional articles were identified from the reference lists of the included articles, of which 422 articles were duplicates and were removed. A total of 2954 articles were evaluated for inclusion at the title and abstract screening level. 2849 were excluded, and 105 articles were assessed at the full-text level, leading to 88 articles being excluded. The remaining seventeen articles were included in the final synthesis as they reported interventions and strategies to address school violence in the SADC region.

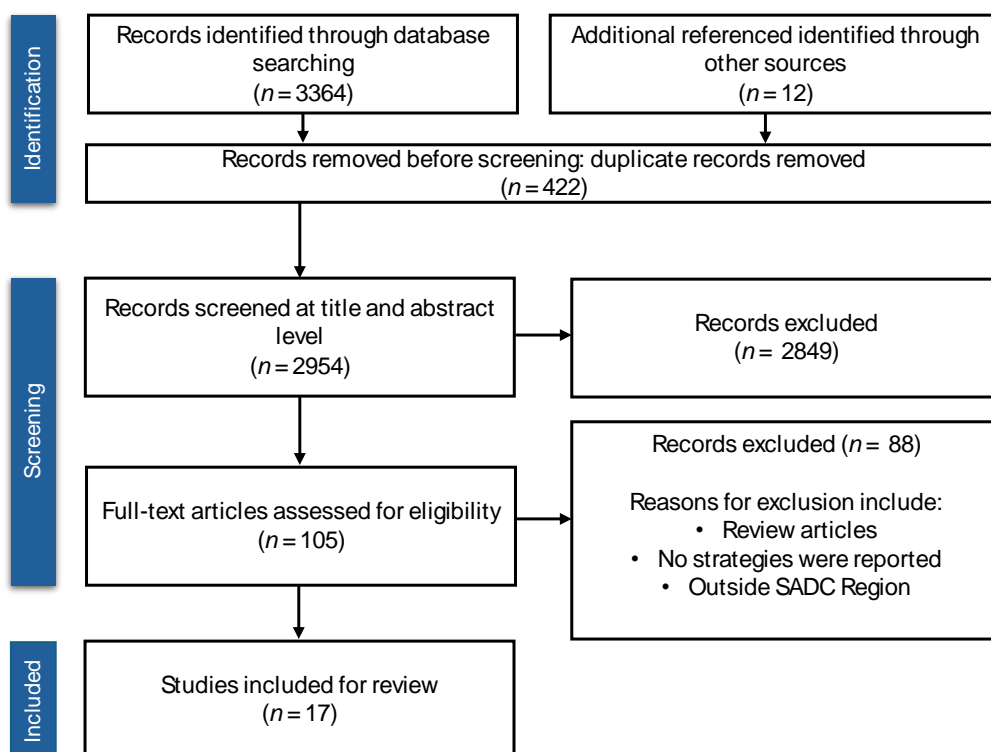


Figure 1: PRISMA diagram for study selection

Study Characteristics

Overall, the final 17 articles included in the synthesis included studies conducted in South Africa (n = 15), Zimbabwe (n = 1), and Tanzania (n = 1). The articles included reported that they used the following methods: qualitative research methods (n = 10), cluster randomised approach (n = 4), and action research / participatory research approaches (n = 2). The articles reported on interventions (n = 8) and strategies (n = 9) used in SADC schools to address school violence. Further details about the included studies are outlined in Appendix A. The results following the synthesis and analysis are categorised into two themes (Table 2): i) interventions used, and ii) strategies used.

Table 2: Themes and Subthemes

Themes	Subthemes
Interventions used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher training on violence management interventions • Curriculum-aligned interventions • Community-based interventions • Peer-driven interventions
Strategies used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and teacher-initiated approaches • School policies and codes of conduct • Physical surveillance and security measures

Teacher Training on Violence Management Interventions

The current review found that schools and organizations interested in education systems equipped teachers with the necessary tools to deal with and reduce issues of school violence. EmpaTeach, an intervention program reported by Bakari et al., helped teachers and coordinators improve classroom management.²⁶ The program emphasized teachers providing advice, using non-abusive language, participatory rule-making, using praises and rewards, and applying alternative discipline strategies instead of using corporal punishment. This contributed to a decrease in the use of corporal punishment. The program empowered teachers to provide counselling or advice to misbehaving learners. When these efforts failed, they would escalate the matters to the school’s disciplinary committees. A similar teacher training intervention was provided through Skhokho, a school-based program, where training was provided to Life Orientation (LO) teachers.²⁷ Through the program, LO teachers were introduced to the program materials and provided with additional background on the issues covered. They received training in positive discipline and classroom management, stress and coping, and implementing policies and values. While the teachers’ behaviour was not assessed, and this training was not evaluated for its effectiveness, it was positively received.

Curriculum-aligned Interventions

Khuzwayo, Taylor, and Connolly's intervention, Operation Sukuma Sakhe, involved implementing a behavioural risk-reduction intervention in eight schools.²⁸ The intervention aligned with Life Orientation topics such as awareness of oneself, peer pressure, making decisions, healthy interpersonal relationships, birth control, pregnancy among adolescents, and contraceptives. The intervention was implemented within two months and resulted in an 11% decrease in weapon carrying for the intervention group, while the control group decreased by 7%. Another program, implemented in a study by Taylor et al., a 20-academic-module intervention, demonstrates the potential of interactive approaches, including role-playing, discussions, and debates.²⁹ Through these interactive approaches, the program’s

²⁶ Mtumwa Bakari et al., “Qualitative Process Evaluation of the EmpaTeach Intervention to Reduce Teacher Violence in Schools in Nyarugusu Refugee Camp, Tanzania,” *BMJ Open* 13, no. 9 (September 21, 2023): e069993, <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2022-069993>.

²⁷ Rachel Jewkes et al., “RCT Evaluation of Skhokho: A Holistic School Intervention to Prevent Gender-Based Violence among South African Grade 8s,” *PLOS ONE* 14, no. 10 (October 29, 2019): e0223562, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0223562>.

²⁸ Nelisiwe Khuzwayo, Myra Taylor, and Catherine Connolly, “Changing Youth Behaviour in South Africa,” *Health SA Gesondheid* 25 (January 29, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.4102/hsag.v25i0.1031>.

²⁹ Myra Taylor et al., “Reducing Physical Aggression in High School Students in KwaZulu-Natal: A Cluster Randomized Trial,” *Violence and Victims* 35, no. 6 (December 1, 2020): 861–84, <https://doi.org/10.1891/VV-D-18-00060>.

aim, which was achieved, was to increase awareness of the detrimental impact of physical violence. The main topics discussed in the interactions included self-awareness, peer pressure, gender roles, gender inequality, and power dynamics. The program was able to reduce learners' experiences of physical altercations and also increase learners' awareness of the consequences of violence and enhance their abilities to resolve conflicts and make decisions. Mathews et al. conducted a school safety program involving two initiatives: training school safety teams and implementing a pilot program called 'Photovoice' for students.³⁰ The program was a school-level intervention focused on reducing the prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) and sexually related aggression, raising awareness about sexual violence laws, and developing skills for participatory safety audits. The initiatives were found to be effective in reducing self-reported incidents of intimate partner violence. The Skhokho program developed and implemented a workbook aligned with the South African compulsory school subject Life Orientation (LO) to reduce dating and sexual violence.³¹ The workbook materials had a strong gender perspective, and this influenced even the sessions not directly addressing gender, relationships, and violence, and covered content such as self-concept, understanding sexuality, substance abuse, human rights violations, GBV, etc.

Community-based Interventions

Another program established to reduce violence in schools was the Thari program, which focused on establishing safe parks that provided psychosocial services and were argued to increase children's resilience and help them cope with adverse childhood experiences, which would lessen violent or aggressive behaviour and make schools safer.³² The program was extensively evaluated, and results indicated that 61% of participants believed that the safe parks helped in addressing gangsterism, and 52% thought that the parks made a significant or large impact. 39% of the participants stated that safe parks were a significant contributor to reducing disciplinary problems. Through the Skhokho program, family intervention workshops were held for learners and their caregivers to strengthen their relationships. They addressed content such as experiences of GBV and perpetration, positive discipline at home, communication skills, relationships, etc.³³ In the program, the workshop facilitators were grouped based on their age, with the older facilitators being allocated to the caregivers' workshops, while the younger facilitators were allocated to the learners' sessions. Attendance at this intervention declined, as 1,376 children were interviewed. The initial session was attended by 49.1% of caregivers, and the numbers went down in the subsequent sessions, with the last session having only 34.5% attendance. Overall, the program's intervention was found to have a generally beneficial impact, including reductions in the amount of violence that the adolescents were exposed to, improved communication with caregivers, and decreases in factors such as bullying and childhood trauma.

Peer-driven Interventions

The participatory action research study by Ngidi and Kaye involved forming a group, We Care (WC), and working with the already existing school peer educators to create a successful intervention strategy to combat violence in schools.³⁴ The intervention by WC included Cure Violence model strategies: disrupting acts of violence, recognizing and changing the thinking of potential transmitters, detecting and interrupting potential violent conflicts, treating the highest risk for involvement in violence, supporting victims and perpetrators of violence among the learners, parents or community members, and promoting group and community norm change. These strategies, including a violence awareness day that was held, showed noticeable results in preventing violence before escalation. Eke highlighted the use of the Representative Council of Learners (RCLs) in initiatives related to managing and lessening

³⁰ Taylor et al., "Reducing Physical Aggression in High School Students in KwaZulu-Natal: A Cluster Randomized Trial."

³¹ Jewkes et al., "RCT Evaluation of Skhokho: A Holistic School Intervention to Prevent Gender-Based Violence among South African Grade 8s."

³² Roelf Reyneke, "The Contribution of Safe Parks to School Safety: Lessons from the Thari-Programme," *Perspectives in Education* 42, no. 1 (March 29, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.38140/pie.v42i1.7201>.

³³ Jewkes et al., "RCT Evaluation of Skhokho: A Holistic School Intervention to Prevent Gender-Based Violence among South African Grade 8s."

³⁴ Lucia Zithobile Ngidi and Sylvia Blanche Kaye, "Reducing School Violence: A Peace Education Project in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa," *South African Journal of Education* 42, no. 2 (May 31, 2022): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v42n2a1989>.

acts of violence in the school.³⁵ Class leaders served as liaisons between learners and school management, communicating information about disciplinary programs, identifying and reducing unacceptable behaviours in school, and mapping areas within the school observed to be high incident zones of violence. The class leaders were seen as problem-solving tools that school management could rely on to help establish solutions during emergency and crisis periods that occurred in the school. Similarly, Ziwanai, Davis, and Harris's study introduced peer mediation to four high schools in Harare over a 10-month period, focusing on school violence education for the learners and teachers, as well as its potential to promote peace. The intervention led to increased engagement in conflict resolution, a reduction in the use of punitive methods, and improved relationships. Moreover, the intervention reduced the use of corporal punishment for disciplinary issues from 205 instances in the seven months before the intervention to three instances during the intervention. Additionally, no cases of suspension, expulsion, or police intervention were recorded in teachers' and principals' records as a result of the intervention. The Skhokho program introduced school clubs that focused on the joys and challenges of school, communication, conflict resolution, and negotiation with caregivers and friends, gender, dating, relationships, safety in relationships, and coping with stress. Initially, the program started with 1,007 pupils from 16 schools. Attendance numbers decreased significantly over time, with only 381 pupils attending the tenth and final session (an average of 23.8 pupils per school). As a result, it is unlikely that the clubs made a significant contribution to the overall intervention effect.³⁶

School and Teacher-initiated Approaches

Moreover, social media use by managers emerged as a valuable tool for managing school violence. According to Eke and Singh, this use helped social capital, and it gave school managers competencies and experience in ways to address school violence in high school settings while controlling the risk factors that lead to school violence in high school.³⁷ Their study noted that principals from the surrounding schools often engaged with colleagues in other schools when challenged with critical school situations that could escalate into serious violence issues. Networking also provides access to information and resources on violence in schools, like the prohibition of muffin sales by learners due to unacceptable behaviour. This led to schools being safer, promoting teaching and learning. Contrary to the proactive, non-violent strategies that we have reported on so far, Makhasane and Mthembu reported that while teachers acknowledged that corporal punishment was banned, they still used it, believing that it was necessary and essential for disciplining learners who misbehave, and this contributed to the better functioning of the school.³⁸ This practice, however, is criticized as impacting the positive relationship between learners and their teachers.³⁹

School Policies and Codes of Conduct

The studies included identified policies as one way of responding to school violence. Metsing and Tlale found that the code of conduct was a useful tool to outline the legal requirements of dealing with school violence and that in some schools, the code of conduct often contained procedures of how the policy worked.⁴⁰ Contrarily, in some schools, the code of conduct was enacted but not emphasized.⁴¹

³⁵ Chidi Idi Eke, "Student Leadership: Participation of the Representative Council of Learners in Management of School Violence in High School," *Perspectives in Education* 40, no. 2 (June 8, 2022): 251–63, <https://doi.org/10.18820/2519593X/pie.v40.i2.18>.

³⁶ Jewkes et al., "RCT Evaluation of Skhokho: A Holistic School Intervention to Prevent Gender-Based Violence among South African Grade 8s."

³⁷ Chidi Idi Eke and Shakila Singh, "Social Networking as a Strategic Tool in the Management of School-Based Violence," *South African Journal of Education* 38, no. 1 (February 28, 2018): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v38n1a1320>.

³⁸ Sekitla Daniel Makhasane Sekitla Daniel Makhasane and Pinkie Mthembu, "Exploring School Violence Misconceptions and Professional Development of Teachers," *African Renaissance* 16, no. 3 (September 17, 2019): 49–66, <https://doi.org/10.31920/2516-5305/2019/V16n3a3>.

³⁹ Bakari et al., "Qualitative Process Evaluation of the EmpaTeach Intervention to Reduce Teacher Violence in Schools in Nyarugusu Refugee Camp, Tanzania."

⁴⁰ Kemoneilwe Noreen Metsing and Lloyd Tlale, "Challenges Faced by Learners Who Are Survivors of School Violence: Implications for Support Structures," *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science (2147- 4478)* 13, no. 4 (June 11, 2024): 456–67, <https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v13i4.3311>.

⁴¹ Tshilidzi Netshitangani, "Management Style and School Violence: South African Perspectives," *International Journal of Educational Management* 32, no. 1 (January 8, 2018): 96–106, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-06-2016-0136>.

As part of monitoring school violence as per the code of conduct, schools often rely on books such as logbooks or incident books or communication books to record learners' acts of violence.⁴² In these books, the violent incident would be recorded together with the support or intervention provided to the affected learners, such as utilizing school support services or calling parents into the school setting to discuss their child's behaviour. The code of conduct in some schools also provided a clear outline of the consequences of violent acts, which included warnings, detention, and suspensions for serious misconduct.⁴³

Physical Surveillance and Security Measures

Strengthened surveillance and security measures were also reported as effective in curbing the spread of school violence. Mabasa, Muluvhu, and Sui et al., outlined that the schools' safety initiatives tended to focus almost exclusively on the physical aspect of security, like surveillance systems, gates, security guards at the gates, and alarm systems.⁴⁴ Moreover, some schools relied on security guards and duty rosters whereby school staff would take turns patrolling the school premises and monitoring school activities to ensure the safety of the learners.⁴⁵

DISCUSSION

The present review supported the multifaceted approaches employed in SADC schools to address school violence, including the establishment and implementation of school policies and codes of conduct, physical surveillance and security measures in schools to prevent violence, teacher training and violence management strategies, behavioural and educational risk-reduction initiatives, school safety and community-based programs, and peer-driven initiatives. These interventions and strategies may help address the barriers to teaching and learning that are commonly experienced, and have the potential to strengthen education systems.⁴⁶

This review found that teachers were exposed to training and capacity development opportunities through the EmpaTeach intervention program and the Skhokho program aimed at equipping them with non-violence classroom management strategies such as using positive discipline, stress and coping, non-abusive language, participatory rulemaking, applying school policies and alternative disciplinary methods instead of corporal punishment, providing counselling advice to correct violence misconducts. Such training is crucial for helping teachers recognise the significance of safe classrooms and schools, and is key as teachers can decisively contribute to ending the issue of violence in schools.⁴⁷

A key aspect of school-based violence prevention involves developing curriculum-aligned programs that directly include learners to explore topics related to violent behaviours and their self-development. The benefits of these programs are long-term and include skills to recognize violence, mechanisms for staying safe, and strategies for managing conflict and anger.⁴⁸ These curriculum-aligned programs identified in this review, include i) Operation Sukuma Sakhe, ii) the 20-module intervention

⁴² Metsing and Tlale, "Challenges Faced by Learners Who Are Survivors of School Violence: Implications for Support Structures"; Netshitangani, "Management Style and School Violence: South African Perspectives."

⁴³ Pryah Mahabeer, "Novice Teachers' Beliefs and Fears about Bullying in Schools in South Africa," *Koers - Bulletin for Christian Scholarship* 85, no. 1 (February 5, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.19108/KOERS.85.1.2445>; Xincheng Sui et al., "Developmental Assets in South African Adolescents Exposed to Violence: A Qualitative Study on Resilience," *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma* 15, no. 1 (March 29, 2022): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40653-021-00343-3>; Metsing and Tlale, "Challenges Faced by Learners Who Are Survivors of School Violence: Implications for Support Structures."

⁴⁴ Matimba Allan Mabasa and Khathutshelo Muluvhu, "Accountability for Parents towards Learners' Violence in High Schools of the Malamulele Central Circuit of South Africa," *Gender and Behaviour* 17, no. 4 (2019): 14392–400; Sui et al., "Developmental Assets in South African Adolescents Exposed to Violence: A Qualitative Study on Resilience."

⁴⁵ Mahabeer, "Novice Teachers' Beliefs and Fears about Bullying in Schools in South Africa."

⁴⁶ Van der Elst et al., "Care and Support for Teaching and Learning: A SADC Response for Ensuring the Education Rights of Vulnerable Children and Youth Are Realized."

⁴⁷ Ane Olabarria et al., "The Characteristics of Teacher Training with Social Impact to Overcome School Violence: A Literature Review," *Future* 2, no. 3 (September 3, 2024): 135–48, <https://doi.org/10.3390/future2030011>.

⁴⁸ World Health Organization, "School-Based Violence Prevention: A Practical Handbook."

by Taylor et al.⁴⁹ iii) the school safety programme by Mathews et al.,⁵⁰ and iv) the Skhokho workbook, all exposed learners to similar content related to self-awareness, self-concept, gender roles, power, gender inequalities, peer pressure, decision-making, sexual abuse, healthy relationships, etc. These programs, implemented in different school contexts, each reduced learners' and teachers' experiences and witnesses of school violence. The Operation Sukuma Sakhe programme decreased the carrying of weapons at school.

The 20-module intervention reduced experiences of physical assaults and increased learners' awareness of the negative consequences of violence. The school safety program aimed at lowering IPV and experiences of sexual violence in the school was found to be effective. The Skhokho workbooks had secondary outcomes indicating measures of adolescents' exposure to violence and contributing to the lessening of IPV risk factors. The Thari program, a community-based initiative that established safe parks providing holistic services such as psychosocial support, building children's resilience, and support for adverse experiences, was found to have reduced school violence related to gangsterism and school disciplinary problems. The family intervention workshops provided through Skhokho were beneficial as they contributed to reductions in adolescents' exposure to violence, improved communication with caregivers, and decreased risk factors such as bullying and childhood trauma. The development and implementation of these different intervention programs to address school violence reflected what a CSTL school looks like: one that integrates education about the rights of children to protection and available services into its curriculum intending to raise awareness and confront harmful attitudes and practices that contribute to children's experiences of violence, exploitation of children, as well as those that encourage children to engage in risky behaviours.⁵¹

Peer-driven interventions demonstrate significant potential to reduce school violence by leveraging the influence of the affected community (i.e., learners and teachers) within the school environment. These approaches, as highlighted in this review, empower learners and their teachers to take charge of the prevalent issues and foster collaboration between learners and school management to create safer schools. These peer-driven interventions identified in this review include: i) the We Care initiative by school peer educators, ii) using RCLs in managing and lessening acts of violence in schools, and iii) using student peer meditators to reduce school violence.⁵² In the We Care Initiative, peer educators designed multiple strategies for combating school violence, including an awareness day, and proved to be successful as violence incidents reportedly declined. Using RCLs showed the significant role class leaders have in identifying and reducing misconduct, high-risk areas in school premises, and communicating disciplinary programs. Using peer educators resulted in the design of different initiatives, including awareness campaigns using posters and placards with peace messages, formal presentations, and working with teachers or school authorities to resolve reported incidents of violence. This program was effective as it lessened corporal punishment used by teachers in the school and overall reports of incidents of violence. The use of these different peer-driven interventions reflects the collaborative partnership between teachers and learners in addressing violence in school, therefore reflecting what a CSTL school looks like: teachers and learners are aware of the warning signs of harm, abuse, or harassment, teachers report and refer learners who are victims of abuse or violence at home or school to school authorities or structures created for their safety and protection, and that peer support groups and clubs are encouraged and established to ensure the provision of education and advocacy for schools that are safe and protective.⁵³

The findings also highlighted specific strategies employed by the schools and teachers to address school violence. School staff utilize social media channels to communicate, track, and support one

⁴⁹ Taylor et al., "Reducing Physical Aggression in High School Students in KwaZulu-Natal: A Cluster Randomized Trial."

⁵⁰ Catherine Mathews et al., "Effects of PREPARE, a Multi-Component, School-Based HIV and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Prevention Programme on Adolescent Sexual Risk Behaviour and IPV: Cluster Randomised Controlled Trial," *AIDS and Behavior* 20, no. 9 (September 3, 2016): 1821–40, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-016-1410-1>.

⁵¹ Miet Africa, "Guide for Operationalising Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) in Schools in the SADC Region," *Miet Africa*, 2021.

⁵² Ngidi and Kaye, "Reducing School Violence: A Peace Education Project in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa"; Francis Ziwanai, Jason Davis, and Geoff Harris, "Reducing Violence in Zimbabwean High Schools via Peer Mediation," *African Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies* 13, no. 2 (August 1, 2024): 85–96, <https://doi.org/10.31920/2634-3665/2024/v13n2a4>.

⁵³ Miet Africa, "Guide for Operationalising Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) in Schools in the SADC Region."

another in instances of school violence. This aligns with the CSTL goal that schools establish and maintain mechanisms for identifying possible violent incidents and learners who need intervention. Contrary to the previously started proactive strategies for classroom management, the findings also revealed that some schools use corporal punishment.⁵⁴ This strategy, while the participants of the specific study argued to be effective, constitutes school violence and a violation of learners' rights in the region.⁵⁵ This CSTL framework argues against its use, and we argue that teachers may resort to using it due to contextual factors such as encouragement from parents, cultural and religious beliefs, absence of alternatives, and authoritarian education. A similar program, such as EmpaTeach, may be employed to empower teachers with alternative strategies.

The establishment and implementation of school-related policies and codes of conduct are foundational to ensuring that there are rules in place that address school violence and provide safe and conducive school environments. This review found that different SADC schools used these tools to clarify expected learner behaviours and outline legal and disciplinary consequences of violent acts. In conjunction with these tools, mechanisms such as using logbooks, communication books, and incident report books helped track incidents of school violence, as well as responses and interventions employed. Segalo supported the usefulness of logbooks and the potential for such tools to show the deeply embedded nature of violence and tracking actions taken by teachers or disciplinary committees.⁵⁶ Moreover, the effectiveness of school policies and logbooks depends on the consistent implementation and involvement of stakeholders such as parents and school psychosocial support services. The installation of surveillance and security measures, such as having school security guards, surveillance cameras, gates, and alarm systems, was highlighted as a strategy to ensure the school premises are protected from any community violence and violence within the school premises. Additionally, duty rosters for patrolling the school premises were a proactive layer of vigilance to ensure that violent acts, such as bullying, and contributors to school violence, such as substance use, on the school premises, did not occur. The establishment and implementation of school policies and codes of conduct reflect what a CSLT school looks like: it has effective disciplinary processes and established school policies in place to prevent and reprimand any school community members who use violence, exploitation, abuse, or prejudice against the learners.⁵⁷

RECOMMENDATIONS

This scoping review synthesised evidence on interventions and strategies used to address school violence in the SADC region. While the researchers are confident that the scoping review was beneficial in comprehensively mapping the literature, they acknowledge that some literature may have been missed due to the methodology and the limited scope of the searches, which were confined to a selected database. Nevertheless, the study makes recommendations for future research and policy implementation in the subsequent section.

Most of the articles included in this review were produced in South Africa, therefore suggesting that research reporting on interventions and strategies used to address violence within SADC schools is lacking. In light of this, this review puts forth that SADC states should intensify research focused on school violence so that approaches encouraged by member states' education ministries are research and evidence-based. There is also a need to research how topics such as self-awareness, peer pressure, decision-making, and healthy relationships are articulated in the primary and secondary educational curricula of the different member states and if, indeed, they have the potential to reduce school violence in other contexts. SADC member states must emphasise the CSTL policy framework to their education departments and schools as it aims to prevent, mitigate, and address factors such as school violence, which negatively impacts school enrolment, learner retention, scholarly performance, and progression at different school levels. When designing interventions and strategies, SADC member states' education

⁵⁴ Sekitla Daniel Makhasane and Mthembu, "Exploring School Violence Misconceptions and Professional Development of Teachers."

⁵⁵ Alison Breen, Karen Daniels, and Mark Tomlinson, "Children's Experiences of Corporal Punishment: A Qualitative Study in an Urban Township of South Africa," *Child Abuse & Neglect* 48 (October 2015): 131–39, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2015.04.022>.

⁵⁶ Letlhoye Segalo and Puleng Hlatshwayo, "Learner' School Violence Using Incident Logbook: A Qualitative Research Approach," *Technium Social Sciences Journal* 26 (December 9, 2021): 294–302, <https://doi.org/10.47577/tssj.v26i1.4884>.

⁵⁷ Miet Africa, "Guide for Operationalising Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) in Schools in the SADC Region."

departments and individual schools should consult teachers, learners and their parents, and professionals providing school social work and psychosocial support services about factors that contribute to the violence and explore possible strategies for interventions. This will strengthen collaboration between different stakeholders and education departments, further ensuring that the intervention is context-specific and relevant. Generally, school violence interventions and strategies should comprise school policies with clear disciplinary methods, teacher training, peer-driven initiatives, and the incorporation of moral education in the school curriculum.

CONCLUSION

This review highlighted the significance of the multifaceted approaches to addressing violence within the SADC schools. The synthesized evidence suggests that context-specific interventions and strategies are needed to address acts of violence in school settings and that a combination of school policies and codes of conduct enforcement, teacher training, peer-driven initiatives, and broader community-based strategies can contribute to safer school environments. Additionally, teachers' management strategies, such as the use of non-violent discipline methods and aligning school violence interventions and strategies to some of the school subjects' curricula, showed measurable reductions in acts of violence in schools. While these interventions and strategies are noted and were highlighted as significant in reducing school violence, there exists continued corporal punishment used to discipline learners by some teachers. This undermines efforts to deal with the phenomenon effectively. Overall, there is a need to strengthen and expand existing strategies while also comprehensively addressing the context-specific barriers that contribute to violence in the SADC schools, thereby ensuring that school environments are safe and conducive for teaching and learning. Ultimately, the CSTL policy framework should serve as a roadmap for schools in the SADC region.

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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

Appendix A

Author/s (date)	Title	Country	Methods	Sample/ Participants	Summarized findings on interventions/ strategies used
Bakari et al (2023)	Qualitative process evaluation of the EmpaTeach intervention to reduce teacher violence in schools in Nyarugusu Refugee Camp, Tanzania	Tanzania	Qualitative approach	The study included 58 and 39 participants at midline and endline, respectively, 3 education coordinators, 29 intervention coordinators, 14 headteachers and discipline teachers, 25 teachers and 26 students.	EmpaTeach intervention is a Tanzanian program designed to help teachers in Congolese and Burundian schools improve their classroom management and discipline. The program involved training sessions that focused on alternative discipline strategies, such as providing advice and counseling, using non-abusive language, participatory development of class rules and regulations, and the use of praise and reward. Teachers used these strategies to address misbehavior and improve their understanding of subjects and they also learned about the importance of positive interactions with students and the role of praise in promoting good behavior. Teachers also discussed the use of praise and rewards, including singing positive songs and clapping. The program helped teachers develop skills in self-regulation and well-being techniques to control emotions and manage stress., and they learned to pray before acting when students annoyed them and found these strategies helpful even at home. Teachers held discussions between teachers, students, and parents in cases of student misbehavior. The program reduced fear and brought students closer to their teachers, and increased cooperation in problem-solving. This positive communication allowed teachers to support students with challenges they faced in their lives. The program allowed teachers to reflect on their strengths and ability to change, leading to changes in attitudes and encouraging good practices, and it stimulated changes in norms, leading to more "oneness" or "togetherness" among teachers and students. School staff used the skills gained from the EmpaTeach program to orient peers who missed some sessions.
Jewkes et al (2019)	RCT evaluation of Skhokho: A	South Africa	Cluster randomised	The study included 3756 learners at baseline and 3411	Skhokho intervention included a workbook for learners which followed the curriculum for the compulsory school subject Life Orientation (LO), with training for teachers and positive discipline training offered to all

	<p>holistic school intervention to prevent gender-based violence among South African Grade 8s</p>		<p>controlled trial</p>	<p>learners at end-line data.</p>	<p>staff in the schools. 1) The learner workbook had an accessible, youthful, modern style, which was largely a product of its co-authorship by a Grade 8 learner, and exercises emphasized learning by self-study. This helped circumvent the highly variable training and experience of many LO teachers, and the problem that teachers often lack the equitable and open-minded attitudes that they are expected to teach. A guide for teachers with model answers for the activities was also developed. The materials had a strong gender lens, and this permeated even the sessions not directly addressing gender, relationships and violence. 2) All LO teachers were invited to attend 2 days of training at the start of the study and refresher training on three occasions over the following 14 months. Most teachers attended the initial training and one further training day and were introduced to the materials and given more background on the issues covered. In addition, they were trained in positive discipline and classroom management, stress and coping and putting policies and values into action. The intervention was positively received, even though formal evaluations of its effectiveness were not conducted. 3) In the second year, any child from Grades 8-11 could attend school clubs held for 30 minutes during break time, which focused on joys and problems of school, communication, conflict and negotiation with caregivers and friends, gender, dating and relationships, safety in relationships and coping with stress. 4) Families' workshops were held for caregivers and their Grade 8 children to strengthen their relationships. They were held in groups of about 20 caregivers and 20 pupils, over four weekend days. They were rolled out over eight months in the first year of the trial due to staffing constraints, so some finished 12 months before the final assessment. The content was manualized and used participatory learning approaches, including critical reflection, drama and skills building. Most of the workshop was conducted with separate peer groups, but at the end of each day, there was a dialogue session to promote caregiver-teenager communication.</p>
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<p>Khuzwayo et al. (2020).</p>	<p>Changing youth behaviour in South Africa</p>	<p>South Africa</p>	<p>Cluster randomised controlled Trial</p>	<p>The study included 2000 learners.</p>	<p>Operation Sukuma Sakhe, a behavioural risk-reduction intervention, was implemented if a school was in the intervention group. Two facilitators per school (a total of 8 schools) delivered 45-minute to 1-hour sessions, over 2 months, which took place during the life orientation (LO) periods. Sessions' content comprised the following topics: 'knowing yourself', 'peer pressure', 'decision-making', 'healthy and unhealthy relationships', 'contraceptives', 'teenage pregnancy', 'condom use', 'HIV/AIDS and STI prevention', 'alcohol and drug abuse', 'violence and gender-based violence', 'child support grant', 'human rights' and 'responsibilities in sexual health'. The sessions were designed to include brainstorming group discussions, role-plays, reflections and demonstrations. The process of implementation of the intervention was assessed by requesting that the facilitators record each session by giving students an attendance register to sign for each session and revealed a decrease of 11% between baseline and follow-up amongst the learners in the intervention group reporting carrying of a weapon during the previous 30 days compared to the 7% decrease in the control group. Overall, the intervention appeared to have reduced the number of days students carried weapons to their schools, with the intervention group indicating a significant reduction in the number of learners carrying weapons to school compared to the control group.</p>
<p>Taylor et al (2020)</p>	<p>Reducing Physical Aggression in High School Students in KwaZulu-Natal: A Cluster Randomized Trial</p>	<p>South Africa</p>	<p>Cluster randomised controlled trial</p>	<p>The study included 685 learners.</p>	<p>A 20-module intervention program was implemented in high school classrooms to increase awareness about the negative effects of physical violence. The program used role plays, debates, role plays, and videos to motivate students to counter attitudes and social influences supporting violence. The program focused on understanding oneself, and addressing peer pressure, gender roles, and gender inequality. It also addressed conflict resolution, interpersonal violence, and good relationships. The intervention reduced students' experience of being hit but did not change their perpetration of hitting.</p>

<p>Mathews et al. (2016).</p>	<p>Effects of PREPARE, a Multi-component, School-Based HIV and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Prevention Programme on Adolescent Sexual Risk Behaviour and IPV: Cluster Randomised Controlled Trial</p>	<p>South Africa</p>	<p>Cluster randomised controlled Trial</p>	<p>The study included adolescents in Grade 8.</p>	<p>The intervention was multi-component, comprising an educational programme, a school health service and a school safety programme. The educational programme consisted of 21 sessions delivered once a week. The session duration ranged from 1 to 1.5 hr. Sessions included up to 25 participants, and the education methods were interactive and skills-based. The programme was built upon the Respect4U programme, an IPV and HIV prevention intervention which was developed based on the Jewkes conceptual framework and piloted-tested among Grade 8 students in nine typical Western Cape high schools over 3 years. School safety teams were invited to a two-day training at a central venue, conducted by the PREPARE team with the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP), an NGO. The school safety programme comprised two initiatives, 1) Presentation of the laws regarding sexual violence, concepts of participatory safety audit and plan, and a small group work to plan school safety audit. 2) Photovoice (five 2-h sessions), 20 randomly selected, PREPARE participant volunteers. Risk mapping of unsafe situations and places in school, taking photographs to portray safe and unsafe situations and places, presenting to the forum of principals, teachers, parents, police officers, and community stakeholders</p>
<p>Reyneke (2024)</p>	<p>The Contribution of Safe Parks to school safety: Lessons from the Thari-programme</p>	<p>South Africa</p>	<p>Quantitative approach</p>	<p>The study included 115 learners and caregivers.</p>	<p>The Thari program, a school-based intervention, has been found to significantly contribute to reducing gangsterism and improving children's safety. A majority of respondents (61%) felt that safe parks contributed to this issue, with 52% of respondents feeling the parks made a significant or large contribution. However, 30% were unsure about the impact on children's behavior. The majority of respondents (39%) believed that safe parks significantly improved their children's behavior, while 33% believed they made a small to fair contribution. This could be due to the structured nature of programs at primary schools and the financial cost of having safe parks in the community. An overwhelming number (94%) of respondents indicated that a safe park was needed at their child's school, indicating that caregivers perceive safe parks as valuable resources. They were satisfied with the</p>

					<p>services provided by Safe Parks, with 81% encouraging other caregivers to send their children to them. School-based interventions like safe parks can help bolster the resilience of learners, providing educational support, such as educational games, homework assistance, and reading and writing assistance. The primary caregivers at safe parks should focus on educational activities, sports development, counseling, and providing a sense of belonging and mastery for children. Safe parks have the potential to help communities deal with gangs and reduce disciplinary problems. They also contribute to the development of resilience skills, leading to improved academic performance and reduced risky behaviors. Overall, safe parks are a worthwhile investment in communities.</p>
<p>Ngidi & Kaye (2022) [38]</p>	<p>Reducing school violence: A peace education project in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa</p>	<p>South Africa</p>	<p>Participatory action research</p>	<p>The study included 32 educators, 32 learners, 40 parents, and 7 community members.</p>	<p>As part of the study, the action team decided to form a group, We Care (WC), with the objective of blocking the transmission of violence from one person to another. The group was presented with the Cure Violence model strategies: interrupting transmission directly, identifying and changing the thinking of potential transmitters, and changing group norms. The outcomes of the Cure Violence model as an intervention strategy were evaluated. The WC and SPE groups were imparted with valuable knowledge during this study – knowledge that they would be able to use in years to come in the school and in the surrounding communities. It must be noted that during the study, we concentrated on two high schools as the means of testing possible solutions to school violence. It is not possible to generalise the success of the intervention strategy to all South African schools; however, the outcomes indicate that curbing violence before it was transmitted to other stakeholders did show noticeable results in KwaZulu-Natal. The possibility exists of widening the sample to more than the two schools in the sample. On our follow-up visit, the WC and SPE groups reported that they had arranged a Violence Awareness Day on 27 September 2017. Their theme was based on the Cure Violence context: “I refused to be infected with the violent disease, and you?” They also reported that they were very active in dealing with many cases involving parents. Two cases managed by</p>

					the WC and SPE groups from February 2017 to September 2017 are described in the next section.
Eke (2022)	Student leadership: Participation of the representative council of learners in management of school violence in high school	South Africa	Qualitative approach	The study included 12 RCL learners.	The Representative Council for Learners (RCLs) was a structure to instill control and create a school environment that promotes learning. Communication between learners and school administrators was facilitated by the RCL leadership. The flow of information from class leaders helped in lessening acts of violence in high schools, as the class leaders assisted school administrators in identifying those responsible for the violence. Additionally, the class leaders also assist school administrators in identifying high-risk areas in the school with high incidents of violence. The study concluded that most class leaders are happy to carry out their responsibilities in an effective and efficient manner. The core issue that kept coming up was that the class leaders were not provided with any form of structured, suitable training or development activities afforded to them.
Ziwanai, Davis & Harris (2024).	Reducing Violence in Zimbabwean High Schools via Peer Mediation	Zimbabwe	Action research approach	The study included 20 learners and 76 teachers.	Peer mediation intervention was introduced as part of the research at the four high schools in Harare over a 10-month period. Fifteen Form Three students were trained in mediation, aiming to educate students and teachers on school violence, its causes, and its potential to promote peace. Peer mediators were chosen based on teachers' recommendations. The intervention led to increased engagement in conflict resolution, reduced use of punitive methods, improved relationships, and a decrease in incidents of suspension, expulsion, or police use. Teachers began to engage in dialogue, and positive behaviors were modelled with respect for diversity. The program also had positive spillovers outside the school environment, with 52 mediation incidents reported in the mediators' diaries.
Eke & Singh (2018)	Social networking as a strategic tool in the management	South Africa	Qualitative approach	The study included 18 Participants.	Social media was a tool used by school managers to network and acquire skills on how to approach risk factors leading to school violence. School principals consulted principals in other schools when facing adverse situations that could degenerate into serious school-based violence issues. The findings of the study revealed that networking allowed teachers to share ideas and information and support each other

	of school-based violence				on work-related matters. School administrators were able to harness information and new trends on acts of violence in school settings from other school administrators within the social networking groups. Overall, school administrators could respond to violent matters adequately and effectively, thus creating a safer school environment.
Makhasane & Mthembu (2019) [29]	Exploring school violence misconceptions and the professional development of teachers	South Africa	Qualitative approach	The study included 1 principal of the school, 3 teachers and learners (3 focus groups with 4 learners).	One teacher acknowledged the fact that corporal punishment was banned in South African schools, but she was adamant that it was necessary. In essence, she postulated that the school would not function if teachers stopped using corporal punishment: In this particular school, corporal punishment is helpful for disciplining learners who misbehave. While teachers understood that corporal punishment was banned, they were of the view that it was essential to correct learners' behaviour and for a functioning school. The study outlines that it is also of paramount importance to highlight the misconceptions about this supposedly noble endeavour carried out by caring teachers.
Metsing & Tlale (2024) [26]	Challenges faced by learners who are survivors of school violence: implications for support structures	South Africa	Qualitative study, phenomenology	The study included 5 principals and 30 teachers.	The participating school only relied on developmental workshops to be able to equip the teachers with knowledge and skills to deal with problematic behaviour. However, these workshops were not equipping teachers to be confident and carry authority in supporting learners as some participants indicated that the workshops were unsuccessful.
Netshitangani (2017)	School Management Teams' Perspective of the Gendered Nature of School Violence in South African	South Africa	Qualitative approach, case study	The study included 2 teachers and 2 SGBs.	The study found that some female teachers addressed issues of school violence by applying processes specified in the school's policy. The incidents of violence or unacceptable behaviours would be recorded in the communications books, then the parents would be informed of the matter and invited to the school to discuss it. Only after the discussion meeting, would the child be allowed to go back to class. After that, the school would then decide what kind of disciplinary actions (e.g., learner suspension) it could apply. Additionally, the female teachers relied on male teachers to handle some instances of violence.

	Public Schools				
Netshitanngani (2016)	Management style and school violence: South African perspectives	South Africa	Qualitative approach	The study included 2 groups of learners, 2 teachers, and 2 representatives of SGBs.	The schools have policies on acts of violence in the school setting. The study showed that the schools were in possession of an official school code of conduct, which contained violence management strategies. However, the code of conduct was generally not implemented by the schools. In some schools, the code of conduct was visible only in the principal's office. There were no notice boards displaying the code of conduct, school rules, or warnings in any of the study's schools. While the teachers and school administrators sometimes made reference to the code of conduct, they did not emphasise it.
Sui et al (2021).	Developmental Assets in South African Adolescents Exposed to Violence: a Qualitative Study on Resilience	South Africa	Qualitative approach	The study included 17 boys and 13 girls.	The adolescents had to follow the rules set out by their schools. There were repercussions for acts of violence, such as threatening others and using verbal or physical abuse against others. Repercussions included warnings and detentions, which helped create a safer school climate and also conveyed that violence is not acceptable in the school. Several schools also had camera surveillance and security personnel on patrol, monitoring the school in order to keep it safe for the adolescents. Moral values like respect, kindness, peace, and harmony, and topics of anti-violence were incorporated into many of the schools' education curricula. These moral values and topics were covered during Life Orientation lessons and through school plays and productions. The schools occasionally invited guest speakers whom the adolescents could relate to. An example of such a speaker would be a young man who was talented in rap music and with high aspirations, who encouraged the adolescents to be kind to each other and participate in activities that help them achieve their goals in life. In so doing, the schools helped adolescents in realising that violence is wrong and that they should instead act in a prosocial manner.
Mahabeer (2020)	Novice Teachers' Beliefs and Fears about	South Africa	Qualitative approach, interpretivist	The study included 4 teachers.	There was a learners' code of conduct, which included ways in which schools should respond to school violence. Instances of violence, like a learner who insults, assaults, or causes behaviour that violates other learners, would lead to the perpetrators being suspended. Minor

	Bullying in Schools in South Africa				misconduct was resolved by both the school administrators and the parents of the affected learners. A ground duty roster was created to ensure that learners were always supervised and teachers were not allowed to leave learners unattended.
Mabasa & Muluvhu (2017).	Accountability for parents towards learners' violence in high schools of the Malamulele Central circuit of South Africa	South Africa	Qualitative approach, case study	Not stated.	The school developed of school policy on safety in some of the schools, which was merely outlined as one-sentence points to be taken into consideration in dealing with safety issues. Additionally, the school's safety initiatives focused almost exclusively on the physical aspect of security, such as things like fences, gates, burglar-proofing, etc.
Mosito & Sitoyi (2024)	School violence and its impact on teachers' well-being	South Africa	Qualitative approach	The study included 3 teachers,	The various methods to address violent behavior in their school were used, including self-reflection, escalating to the principal's office, involving parents in discussions, and implementing clear discipline policies. However, none of these measures have effectively curbed or prevented learner violence against teachers. The school lacked clear policies and support from education authorities.