

## Prevention/Child or Youth Offender: Maltreatment Behaviour

There is an unclear effect of school-based programmes in preventing peer violence among middle schoolers (12-14 years).

<b>Evidence status</b>	<b>Some concerns</b>	There are mixed results from studies of school-based interventions in preventing peer violence and gender-based violence.
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### The summary in brief

This cell has three primary studies. All examine school-based prevention programmes for middle-schoolers. The programmes come from various geographical regions: the US, Pakistan, and South Africa. The approach adopted in each is different: one is curriculum-based, another is life skills and holistically implemented, and the third is play-based.

The results from the studies are mixed. Whilst there are some indications that violence experienced and committed by students who participated in the interventions was reduced, many of the findings are not statistically significant, meaning the effect is only small or based on a small sample and so is not reliable.

### Contents of the cell

The cell has three studies (*Taylor 2010*, *Jewkes 2019*, *Karmaliani 2020*).

There is a full summary of *Karmaliani 2020* in the guidebook.

<i>Taylor 2010</i> RCT, high risk of bias.	USA. 6 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> graders. Evaluation of a curriculum-based gender violence and sexual harassment prevention intervention among adolescents.
<i>Jewkes 2019</i> RCT, some concerns.	South Africa. 8 <sup>th</sup> graders. Evaluation of Skhokho, a multi-pronged approach to prevent gender-based violence involving students, teachers, school personnel, and parents/caregivers.
<i>Karmaliani 2020</i> RCT, low risk of bias.	Pakistan. 6 <sup>th</sup> to 8 <sup>th</sup> graders. Evaluation of Right to Play's structured play-based intervention with trained coaches to reduce peer violence and improve outcomes for depression.

### The interventions

All interventions in this cell are school-based programmes for middle schoolers (12-14 years).

The intervention in Taylor 2010 aimed to prevent gender violence and sexual harassment among 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders attending suburban schools in a US city. Two curricula on gender violence, harassment and “dating violence” prevention were implemented. One curriculum was interaction-based and focused on “setting and communicating boundaries in relationships; the formation of deliberate relationships and friendships and the continuum between friendship and intimacy; the determination of wanted and unwanted behaviors; and the role of the bystander as intervener.” The lessons were intended to challenge students to think about these issues. The other curriculum took a “law and justice” approach. It included information on “laws, definitions, information, and data about penalties for sexual assault and sexual harassment, as well as imparting results from research about the consequences for perpetrators of GV/SH”. The interaction-based curriculum was meant to promote understanding and conversations about GV/SH, while the law and justice curriculum presented facts, data, and legal consequences.

Skhokho (Jewkes 2019) examined a holistic gender-based violence prevention programme. It targets various aspects of gender-based violence, such as promoting gender equality, challenging harmful gender norms, enhancing critical thinking skills, fostering positive relationships, and providing support systems for students. It is implemented in schools, using a combination of classroom-based activities, teacher training, peer education, and community engagement. It includes multiple interventions, such as a life-orientation curriculum workbook for eighth grade students, training for teachers, and a workshop for parents/caregivers and teenagers, which was rolled into student clubs in the second year of the programme.

Right to Play, an international NGO, implemented a play-based intervention for middle-schoolers in multiple schools in a large Pakistani city (Karmaliani 2020). The intervention included trained coaches who led students through manualized play-based activities (more than 100 of them over two years of the programme) followed by a period of reflection on the activity and encouragement for students to relate them to their lives in school and at home. The programme also included periodic information sessions for parents and caregivers on children’s rights, gender equity, and positive discipline. Additionally, teachers received training on these topics.

### **Do the interventions work in improving child or youth offender maltreatment behaviour?**

The results, based on self-reports of violence by children - were mixed. Right to Play’s intervention resulted in less peer violence, both as perpetrator and victim, for those in the intervention than those in the control group. In the Skhokho intervention, there was a small effect on violence protection but it was not statistically significant. The US study also found no statistically significant effect on peer violence from the intervention.

### **Have the interventions been implemented at scale?**

Not quite. While the Right to Play intervention covered many schools in one populous district in Pakistan, all the studies were designed as research studies that could be scaled up in the future.

### Which type of organization delivered the interventions?

Trained facilitators and coaches, or researchers usually conduct intervention activities.

### What do the interventions cost?

Detailed cost analyses are not available.

### How are the programmes meant to work? The theory of change

The curricula in Taylor 2010 are based on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). “TRA is based on research that demonstrates that intentions to behave are immediate predecessors to specific actions and proposes that attitudes towards and perceived norms about the desired behavior facilitate the intention to change, modify, or adopt a particular behavior” i.e., improved beliefs, attitudes (interaction-based curriculum), and knowledge (law and justice curriculum) related to gender violence and sexual harassment can reduce that behaviour.

A theory of change model was developed for Skhoho (Jewkes 2019) which was the conceptual basis for the programme. It includes drivers of gender-based violence such as patriarchal gender norms and a culture of acceptance of violence manifested through factors such as gender norms at home, at school, among peers, poor communication, harsh punishment at home and school, and witnessing intimate partner violence at home. Finally, intervention targets for each of the factors are identified, such as students, teachers, or parents or caregivers.

### How reliable is the evidence?

It’s mixed. Each of the three RCTs has a different risk of bias rating.

### *Risk of Bias for Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs)*

Study (Author and year)	Overall risk of bias	Randomization process	Deviations from intended interventions	Missing outcome data	Measurement of the outcome	Selection of the reported result
<i>Taylor 2010</i>	High risk of bias	Low risk	Some concerns	High risk	High risk	Some concerns
<i>Jewkes 2019</i>	Some concerns	Some concerns	Low risk	Low risk	Some concerns	Low risk
<i>Karmaliani 2020</i>	Low risk of bias	Low risk	Low risk	Low risk	Low risk	Low risk

