


Article

The role of schools in detecting gender violence suffered by children in their homes: what do their teachers say?



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The research project “SomAquí!”/“WeAreHere!” approaches the problem of gender violence from children’s perspective with the aim of contributing towards early detection of this type of violence from the school environment. In the first phase, six groups of experts were set up, formed by children and adolescents, who accompanied the research team over the course of the research. With these groups, the questionnaires were designed that were subsequently answered by 3,650 boys and girls studying in Year 5 to Year 11, inclusive, from among a total of 106 schools in Catalonia. In the second phase, the results of which are presented in this article, the aim was to gain an idea of the opinions of school management, teachers and other members of the education teams of these 106 schools. A total of 322 responses were collected from 86 schools, necessary to be able to listen to their voices and so that, in a third phase, it would be possible to prepare a consensus-based model for the early detection of violence applicable to the school context. The results presented in this article describe the way schools deal with gender violence, the obstacles perceived by teaching staff in detecting cases, and the role that schools and teaching staff do and should play in order to help those children who are suffering gender violence situations in their homes.

Key points

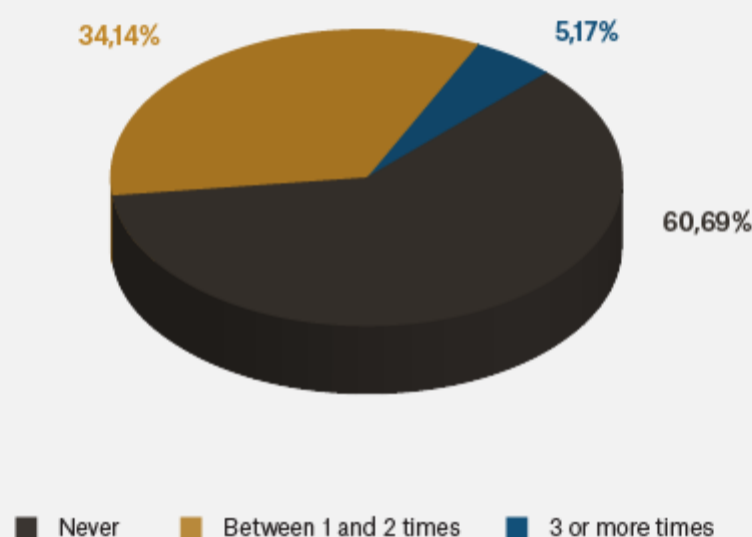
1 In general, the treatment of gender violence by schools is poorly systematised. Normally, when they do approach the subject, they usually talk about physical violence (90%), sexual violence (78%) and psychological violence (76%), and they do this, mainly, by using graphic information (posters, leaflets, etc.), on an occasional basis on special days and depending, above all, on the teaching staff and the education stage. Only 22% of teaching staff affirm that the subject is integrated into the school's education project.

2 According to teaching staff, pupils do not generally report these types of situations to them: usually they say nothing (68%), and avoid the subject or defend their parents (45%). The school finds out when there are evident signs making it manifest or through other professionals. It is considered that school organisational questions, but also training and mistaken beliefs among teachers, are the main obstacles to approaching this issue.

3 Teaching staff believe that they should get involved in the problem and that it is important to refer cases detected by schools (60%). To do this, they need a calm and safe space, improved coordination between different services in the territory, and the establishment of a specific programme within the school's education project. In general, they think that they need support, more training, and knowledge of the protocols.

Application of protocols for situations of gender violence

Frequency with which teaching staff have had to activate violence-related protocols in the last three years



Source: compiled by the authors based on the results of the WeAreHere! questionnaire.

The Social Observatory of the "la Caixa" Foundation.