

Gender-Sensitive Social Studies for Violence Prevention and Active Bystander Awareness in Sukabumi

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ABSTRACT

Gender inequality and violence against women and children are interconnected social problems shaped by unequal power relations, gender norms, silence, and limited awareness of protection mechanisms. This study examined how the experiences of women social activists and child protection stakeholders in Sukabumi, West Java, could inform gender-sensitive Social Studies education for active bystander and violence-prevention awareness among Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) students. Using a two-phase qualitative design, Phase I applied critical ethnography with five women social activists and child protection stakeholders, complemented by interviews with three Social Studies teachers. Phase II used Emancipatory Action Research through a three-session classroom intervention with 92 Grade VIII and IX students from four MTs in Sukabumi City and Regency. Data were collected through interviews, pre- and post-intervention questionnaires, scenario-based reflections, student advocacy products, and classroom documentation, and were analyzed through thematic coding, qualitative pre-post comparison, and triangulation. Findings showed that gender inequality was understood through patriarchal expectations, normalized harmful behavior, underreporting, vulnerability, and limited knowledge of safe reporting pathways. After the intervention, students demonstrated more specific recognition of violence, stronger rejection of gender stereotypes, and more structured explanations of safe bystander responses. The study concludes that locally grounded, gender-sensitive Social Studies education can connect critical understanding of inequality with child protection, violence prevention, and safe bystander responsibility.

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Gender inequality is not limited to differences in access to education, employment, or economic opportunities. It is also reproduced through everyday social relationships, cultural expectations, institutional practices, and unequal distributions of power. In Indonesia, improvements in several gender-development indicators coexist with continuing inequalities across social and economic domains, demonstrating that formal progress does not automatically eliminate gendered structures within everyday life (Cameron, 2023). These inequalities become especially significant when they intersect with violence against women and children, family vulnerability, social stigma, economic dependence, and unequal access to protection.

Violence must therefore be understood not merely as a series of isolated incidents but as a broader social and educational problem. Children and adolescents may encounter violence in different environments, including families, schools, communities, peer groups, and digital spaces. The forms of harm may also overlap. Bullying can extend into cyberbullying; controlling behavior may be interpreted as care; gender stereotypes may normalize unequal relationships; and silence surrounding sexual or domestic violence may prevent victims and witnesses from seeking assistance. Research on bullying and cyberbullying shows that violence among students often involves peer-group dynamics, witnessing behavior, and online bystander responses, not only direct perpetrator-victim relationships (Waasdorp et al., 2022). National child-protection systems such as SIMFONI PPA demonstrate the continuing institutional need to document and respond to different forms of violence against women and children (Banyard et al., 2007; Karimah & Susanti, 2022).

The Sukabumi context is important because violence against women and children remains visible in regional child-protection data. Based on SIMFONI-PPA data accessed during the preliminary data mapping stage of this study in 2025, West Java recorded the highest number of reported violence cases involving children in Indonesia. Within West Java, Sukabumi Regency was included among the five regions with the highest number of reported cases, ranking fifth with 81 recorded cases, while Sukabumi City recorded 20 cases. These figures should be understood as reported cases only, since violence against women and children is often affected by underreporting, stigma, fear, family pressure, and limited knowledge of safe reporting pathways.

The experiences of practitioners who work directly with affected communities are particularly important for understanding these interconnected realities. Women social activists and child protection stakeholders encounter not only formally reported cases but also the social processes surrounding violence: fear, stigma, family pressure, economic vulnerability, lack of information, and uncertainty about where and how to seek help. Feminist Standpoint Theory suggests that knowledge is socially situated and that perspectives developed from positions close to inequality may reveal dimensions of social reality that dominant forms of knowledge overlook (Harding, 1991). The perspectives of women working in community-based organizations and child protection institutions therefore offer an important source of knowledge for understanding how gender inequality is experienced, reproduced, challenged, and addressed.

However, social problems cannot be addressed only after violence has occurred. Prevention requires educational environments in which young people learn to recognize harmful situations, question gender stereotypes, understand available support systems, and develop the confidence to respond safely when witnessing potential harm. This is particularly relevant to the role of the bystander. A bystander is not necessarily a passive observer. Depending on the situation, a witness may reinforce harmful behavior, remain silent, seek assistance, support a victim, document an incident, or intervene through another safe strategy. Research increasingly emphasizes that bystander behavior can influence

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bullying and other forms of interpersonal violence and that supportive adults, school environments, empathy, perceived responsibility, and self-efficacy can shape young people's willingness to act (Banyard et al., 2007; Chen & Wu, 2024; Cohane & Schneider, 2024; Jia et al., 2023).

The concept of the active bystander is especially relevant for adolescents because simply teaching students that violence is wrong does not necessarily prepare them to respond when they witness it. Effective awareness requires several interconnected capacities: noticing that something is happening, interpreting the situation as potentially harmful, recognizing responsibility to respond, and knowing which action can be taken without creating additional danger. Importantly, active bystander education should not encourage children to confront dangerous perpetrators directly. Safe action may instead involve seeking a teacher, accompanying a victim, refusing to participate in bullying, preserving evidence in an online situation, contacting a trusted adult, or accessing an appropriate reporting mechanism (Banyard et al., 2007; Kettrey et al., 2019; Vázquez-González et al., 2023).

The importance of school-based prevention is increasingly recognized in research on bullying, dating violence, and gender-based violence. School-based anti-bullying and violence-prevention programs can support awareness and prevention, although their effects may vary according to context, implementation, school climate, and student characteristics (Gaffney et al., 2021; Waasdorp et al., 2022; Melendez-Torres et al., 2023). Recent studies similarly suggest that creating cultures in which peers collectively reject violence can contribute to prevention and safer school relationships (Gairal-Casadó et al., 2026; Gómez et al., 2025).

In the Indonesian school context, Social Studies, locally referred to as Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial (IPS), provides a potentially important educational space for this work. Social Studies addresses human relationships, social problems, institutions, rights and responsibilities, community life, social change, and citizenship. Gender inequality, bullying, violence prevention, child protection, and responsible participation can therefore be approached not as topics external to the curriculum but as contemporary social issues through which students develop critical and socially responsible understanding.

Despite growing attention to gender-sensitive education, bullying prevention, and bystander intervention, several gaps remain. First, studies on violence prevention in schools often focus on general awareness or anti-bullying programs without sufficiently connecting them to local child-protection realities and gender inequality. Second, the situated knowledge of women social activists and child protection stakeholders is rarely used as a foundation for developing Social Studies learning. Third, limited research has examined how active bystander awareness can be integrated into Indonesian MTs Social Studies classrooms through locally grounded and age-appropriate learning. These gaps indicate the need for an approach that connects community-based child protection knowledge with classroom pedagogy.

This study responds to these gaps by integrating two complementary phases. The first phase used critical ethnography to explore gender inequality and child protection through the perspectives of women social activists and child protection stakeholders in Sukabumi. The second phase translated these perspectives into a gender-sensitive Social Studies intervention implemented through Emancipatory Action Research in four MTs. The theoretical interpretation combined Feminist Standpoint Theory (Harding, 1991), Critical Pedagogy (Freire, 1970), and Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony (Gramsci, 1971).

The novelty of this study lies in connecting women's situated knowledge from child protection practice with gender-sensitive Social Studies education and active bystander awareness. Rather than treating violence prevention as a general moral message, the study translates local findings on patriarchal norms, underreporting, unsafe relationships, bullying, cyberbullying, and reporting barriers into a classroom intervention that helps students recognize harm and identify safe responses.

Therefore, this study aimed to examine how women social activists and child protection stakeholders understand gender inequality and violence in the Sukabumi context, how their knowledge can inform gender-sensitive Social Studies education, and what patterns of change can be

identified in students' awareness of violence prevention and active bystander responsibility following a contextualized educational intervention.

2. METHODS

2.1. Research Design

The study employed an integrated two-phase qualitative and action-oriented research design. The methodological design was drawn from the first author's dissertation research. Phase I used critical ethnography to investigate gender inequality, violence, and child protection through the perspectives of women social activists, child protection stakeholders, and Social Studies teachers. Phase II used Emancipatory Action Research (EAR) to translate the critical ethnographic findings into a classroom intervention and examine their contribution to students' active bystander and violence-prevention awareness.

Critical ethnography was selected because the study was not limited to describing social experiences. It also aimed to examine unequal power relations, patriarchal norms, silence, stigma, underreporting, and the cultural processes through which gender inequality and violence become normalized. The approach was informed by Carspecken's (1996) critical ethnographic framework and complemented by Feminist Standpoint Theory, which positioned women's practitioner knowledge as an important source for understanding social realities surrounding gender, violence, and child protection (Harding, 1991).

EAR was used because the study aimed to move from critical understanding to educational action. The action phase followed the planning-action-observation-reflection logic associated with action research as a practice-based process of educational change (Kemmis, 2009). One structured action cycle was conducted across the participating schools. Reflective adjustments made between school implementations were treated as improvements in facilitation within the same research cycle rather than as separate independent cycles.

Critical ethnography was conducted from October 2025 to January 2026. The EAR phase was conducted from January to May 2026 across four MTs in Kota and Kabupaten Sukabumi. In each school, the intervention was implemented in three sessions over approximately three weeks, with one session conducted each week. This design enabled the study to connect field-based knowledge from women social activists and child protection stakeholders with gender-sensitive Social Studies learning in classroom contexts.

2.2. Research Context and Participants

The study was conducted in Sukabumi, West Java, covering both Kota Sukabumi and Kabupaten Sukabumi. These two administrative areas provided varied social and educational contexts for examining gender inequality, violence prevention, child protection, and Social Studies learning. Kota Sukabumi represented a more urban municipal context, while Kabupaten Sukabumi included rural and semi-rural school contexts with different classroom conditions, student backgrounds, and levels of exposure to child protection or violence-prevention socialization.

Phase I involved five women social activists and child protection stakeholders connected with community-based organizations and governmental protection services (Melendez-Torres et al., 2023). Their institutional contexts included Aisyiyah, PPSW Pasoendan Digdaya Wilayah Jawa Barat, DP3A Kabupaten Sukabumi, UPTD PPA Kota Sukabumi, and P2TP2A Kota Sukabumi. All participants in this stakeholder group were women. Their perspectives were used to understand gender inequality, violence, underreporting, reporting barriers, child protection concerns, and educational needs in the Sukabumi context.

The study also involved three Social Studies teachers from the research context and a comparable school setting. Teacher perspectives were used to understand students' social environments, school conditions, the relevance of sensitive social issues to Social Studies, and the feasibility of integrating gender-sensitive and child-protection content into classroom learning.

Phase II was implemented with 92 Grade VIII and IX students in four MTs located in Kota and Kabupaten Sukabumi. Two schools were located in Kota Sukabumi, while two schools were located in rural or semi-rural areas of Kabupaten Sukabumi. Students participated through intact classroom groups assigned by each school. The student participants represented varied classroom conditions, learning readiness, and prior exposure to discussions on bullying, violence prevention, gender sensitivity, and child protection. The intervention was conducted by the researcher, with Social Studies teachers present during classroom activities. Women activists also participated in selected implementation contexts.

Because the study addressed sensitive issues related to violence and involved students under the age of 18, participant identities were protected in the research analysis. Student responses were coded, and the interpretation focused on patterns of awareness rather than identifying individual students or schools. The recruitment strategy, inclusion criteria, and role of each participant group are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Participant recruitment, inclusion criteria, and role in the study

Participant group	Number/context	Recruitment strategy	Inclusion criteria	Role in the study
Women social activists and child protection stakeholders	5 participants from community-based and governmental child protection contexts	Participants were recruited purposively through organizations and institutions relevant to women's advocacy, child protection, violence prevention, case assistance, and community empowerment.	Participants had direct experience in women's advocacy, child protection, violence prevention, community-based support, or institutional protection services. They also had knowledge of gender inequality, violence, reporting barriers, or child protection issues in Sukabumi or West Java.	Main participants in Phase I. Their perspectives were used to understand gender inequality, violence, underreporting, child protection barriers, and educational needs.
Social Studies teachers	3 teachers from the research context and a comparable school setting	Teachers were recruited purposively based on their relevance to Social Studies learning and MTs/SMP contexts.	Teachers had experience teaching Social Studies or working in relevant MTs/SMP contexts. They were familiar with students' social environments, classroom conditions, and the feasibility of discussing sensitive	Supporting pedagogical participants. Their perspectives were used to identify educational needs and examine the relevance of gender-sensitive and child-protection content for Social Studies.

				social issues in Social Studies learning.	
Grade VIII and/or MTs students	IX	92 students from four MTs classroom groups; two schools in Kota Sukabumi and two schools in rural or semi-rural areas of Kabupaten Sukabumi	Students participated through intact classroom groups assigned by the participating schools.	Students were enrolled in Grade VIII and/or IX in the participating MTs and joined the classroom intervention as part of the learning process.	Participants in Phase II. Their pre- and post-intervention questionnaires, reflections, advocacy outputs, and classroom participation were used to examine patterns of awareness development.

2.3. Phase I: Critical Ethnography

The critical ethnographic phase was organized through five interconnected analytical stages adapted from Carspecken's critical ethnographic framework (Carspecken, 1996). The first stage involved developing a primary contextual record through initial mapping of relevant schools, community organizations, activists, and child protection institutions. Preliminary information regarding social issues affecting children and adolescents in Sukabumi was reviewed to establish the research context.

The second stage involved preliminary reconstructive analysis. Early patterns emerging from the research context included patriarchal expectations, normalization of violence, underreporting, gender stereotypes, limited child protection awareness, and uncertainty regarding appropriate bystander responses. This stage was important because critical ethnography does not only describe social practices, but also examines how inequality and power relations are reproduced in everyday life (Carspecken, 1996).

The third stage focused on dialogical and emic data generation through semi-structured interviews with women social activists and child protection stakeholders. Interviews explored participants' involvement in child protection, the types of cases and social problems encountered, gender inequality within those situations, barriers to reporting, prevention strategies, institutional responses, and recommendations for education. Their perspectives were treated as situated knowledge because Feminist Standpoint Theory emphasizes the importance of knowledge produced from positions close to inequality and social struggle (Harding, 1991).

The fourth stage examined broader system relationships. The data were interpreted across interconnected environments, including families, schools, communities, digital spaces, and protection institutions. Perspectives from Social Studies teachers were compared with stakeholder perspectives to identify educational needs and points of convergence.

The fifth stage involved theoretical interpretation and pedagogical translation. The emerging themes were interpreted using Feminist Standpoint Theory, Critical Pedagogy, and cultural hegemony before being transformed into educational topics, scenarios, discussions, and student activities (Freire, 1970; Gramsci, 1971; Harding, 1991).

2.4. Phase II: Emancipatory Action Research and Educational Intervention

The second phase translated the critical ethnographic findings into a three-session gender-sensitive Social Studies intervention. This phase followed the logic of action research as a practice-based process of educational change, in which planning, action, observation, and reflection are connected to the improvement of practice (Kemmis, 2009).

The intervention was designed to strengthen five interrelated areas:

1. recognition of violence and harmful behavior;
2. understanding of gender inequality and gender stereotypes;
3. child protection and violence-prevention awareness;
4. safe active bystander decision-making; and
5. advocacy and social responsibility.

The same three-session structure was implemented across the four participating MTs. Each session lasted approximately 3×40 minutes and was conducted once a week over approximately three weeks in each school. The core themes, scenarios, and activities were kept consistent across the four schools to maintain comparability of implementation. However, minor facilitation adjustments were made according to classroom dynamics, student readiness, school schedules, and available learning time.

The first session focused on understanding violence, bullying, cyberbullying, and the role of bystanders. Students examined different forms of violence and considered the stages involved in responding as a witness: noticing a situation, recognizing possible harm, assuming appropriate responsibility, and identifying a safe response. This focus was supported by research showing that bullying involves peer-group roles and bystander responses, not only a direct perpetrator-victim relationship (Salmivalli, 2010; García-Díaz et al., 2023)

The second session addressed gender-related and child-protection issues, including sexual violence, domestic violence, human trafficking vulnerability, child marriage, unsafe or controlling relationships, and appropriate pathways for seeking help. Activities encouraged students to distinguish between care and control, identify warning signs, and consider why victims or witnesses may find it difficult to report harm.

The third session focused on active bystander responsibility, reflection, and advocacy. Students discussed how messages communicated through posters, social media, and digital campaigns can be used to promote violence prevention and child protection. They subsequently developed paper or digital advocacy products and reflected on their responsibilities within schools, peer relationships, communities, and digital environments. This was consistent with bystander education research emphasizing that prevention should help students identify safe, realistic, and supportive forms of response rather than encourage unsafe confrontation (Banyard et al., 2007; Kettrey et al., 2019; Vázquez-González et al., 2023).

Several interactive activities were incorporated into the intervention. These included an “Alarm-Warning-Safe” color activity using red, yellow, and green classifications; a continuum from “very caring” to “very controlling”; scenario-based decision-making; bullying and cyberbullying cases; group discussion; and advocacy production. The cyberbullying activities were also supported by studies emphasizing the role of online witnesses, adult support, and responsible digital bystander behavior (Chen & Wu, 2024; Sobol et al., 2025)

The researcher served as the main facilitator during the intervention. Social Studies teachers were present during classroom activities to support classroom management, observe student responses, and provide contextual input when needed. Women activists participated in selected implementation contexts by strengthening the connection between classroom discussion and community-based child protection concerns.

2.5. Data Collection

Data were generated through several complementary instruments: semi-structured interviews, student pre- and post-intervention questionnaires, student reflections and advocacy outputs, classroom observations, and documentation.

The first data source consisted of semi-structured interviews with five women social activists and child protection stakeholders. These interviews formed the primary source for understanding gender inequality, violence, barriers to protection, reporting mechanisms, and recommendations for prevention. Each participant was interviewed once, with interview duration ranging from approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour and 20 minutes. Follow-up clarification was conducted when needed to confirm meanings or complete contextual information.

The second data source consisted of interviews with three Social Studies teachers. These interviews were used to examine the educational relevance of contemporary social problems, students' social environments, classroom feasibility, and opportunities for integrating gender-sensitive and child-protection perspectives into Social Studies learning. Each teacher was interviewed once, with interviews lasting approximately 30 to 60 minutes.

The third data source consisted of student pre- and post-intervention questionnaires. The questionnaires used open-ended and scenario-based questions to examine students' recognition of harmful situations, understanding of gender stereotypes, knowledge of safe responses, and active bystander reasoning before and after the intervention.

The fourth data source consisted of student reflections and advocacy outputs, including paper posters, digital posters, website-style homepages, and, in one implementation context, a short role-play video. These outputs were used to understand students' expressed awareness of violence prevention, child protection, gender sensitivity, safe relationships, and social responsibility.

Classroom observations, photographs, and short audiovisual records were used as supporting documentation of the educational process. These records documented participation, classroom dynamics, implementation processes, and student engagement. They were not treated as an independent audiovisual dataset for formal visual analysis.

The relationship between data sources and analytical focus is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Data sources and analytical focus

Data source	Analytical focus
Interviews with women social activists and child protection stakeholders	Gender inequality, violence, stigma, underreporting, child protection barriers, prevention needs, reporting mechanisms, and educational recommendations.
Interviews with Social Studies teachers	Educational needs, students' social environments, classroom feasibility, and opportunities for integrating gender-sensitive and child-protection perspectives into Social Studies.
Student pre-intervention questionnaires	Students' initial awareness of harmful situations, gender stereotypes, safe responses, and active bystander responsibility.
Student post-intervention questionnaires	Changes in students' awareness, reasoning, reporting knowledge, and safe bystander responses after the intervention.
Student reflections and advocacy outputs	Students' expressed understanding of violence prevention, child protection, gender sensitivity, safe relationships, and social responsibility.

Classroom observations and documentation	and Participation, classroom dynamics, implementation process, student engagement, and supporting evidence of the educational intervention.
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2.6. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed through thematic coding, comparative analysis, qualitative pre-post comparison, and triangulation across data sources. Interview data from women social activists, child protection stakeholders, and Social Studies teachers were analyzed thematically through repeated reading, iterative coding, and comparison. The coding process combined inductive coding, which allowed themes to emerge from the data, and deductive coding, which was guided by the study's theoretical framework and intervention focus. Thematic analysis was used to identify, review, and organize recurring patterns across interview data, student responses, reflections, and advocacy outputs (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017)

The coding procedure was conducted in several stages. First, open coding was used to identify initial meanings and recurring issues in interview transcripts, teacher responses, student questionnaires, reflections, and advocacy outputs. Initial codes included patriarchal expectations, silence, stigma, underreporting of violence, bullying, cyberbullying, care, control, trusted adults, and safe help-seeking. Second, related codes were grouped into broader analytical categories, including gender relations, normalized violence, barriers to child protection, reporting mechanisms, educational needs, and active bystander responsibility.

Third, a comparative analytical matrix was used to examine relationships between the perspectives of women social activists and child protection stakeholders and those of Social Studies teachers. This process helped identify points of convergence between field-based child protection knowledge and educational needs in Social Studies learning. Fourth, themes from the critical ethnographic phase were translated into pedagogical elements, including learning themes, scenarios, classroom discussions, the "very caring" to "very controlling" continuum activity, discussions on safe reporting, and advocacy outputs.

Student questionnaire responses were analyzed through qualitative pre-post comparison. The analysis focused on changes in the specificity, clarity, and safety orientation of students' responses rather than on statistical claims of intervention effectiveness. Particular attention was given to whether students could recognize harmful situations, distinguish violence or control from ordinary conflict, identify trusted sources of assistance, and describe safe bystander actions.

Student reflections and advocacy products were used to support interpretation of the learning process and students' emerging understanding. These data were compared with questionnaire responses, classroom observations, and documentation to strengthen analytical credibility. The goal was not to measure causal effectiveness or long-term behavioral change, but to examine whether students shifted from general responses such as "help" to more structured and safe responses, such as reaching out to trusted adults, refusing to participate in bullying, supporting victims, or safely reporting incidents.

2.7. Trustworthiness and Reflexivity

To strengthen methodological rigor, several trustworthiness strategies were applied. These strategies addressed credibility, dependability, confirmability, and contextual transferability (Nowell et al., 2017; Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Triangulation was conducted by comparing interviews with women social activists and child protection stakeholders, Social Studies teacher interviews, student

questionnaires, classroom observations, student reflections, advocacy outputs, and documentation. This helped identify recurring themes and reduced dependence on a single data source.

Member checking was conducted with selected adult participants after the initial interpretation of interview data. The researcher clarified key meanings, checked whether sensitive statements had been interpreted appropriately, and confirmed whether the emerging themes reflected participants' intended perspectives, especially on issues such as violence, reporting barriers, underreporting, stigma, and child protection. Member checking was not conducted with student participants because student data were collected through coded questionnaires, classroom reflections, and learning outputs rather than personal interviews about lived experiences.

Researcher reflexivity was maintained throughout the study, especially because the researcher was also the main facilitator during the Emancipatory Action Research phase (Berger, 2015). This position allowed direct engagement with students' learning processes, but it also required awareness of how the researcher's role, language choices, facilitation style, and interaction with students could influence classroom dynamics. Reflective notes were therefore kept during fieldwork and after classroom implementation to record emerging interpretations, ethical concerns, student responses, classroom dynamics, and facilitation adjustments.

An audit trail was maintained by organizing interview guides, field notes, questionnaire responses, classroom documentation, student outputs, coding notes, and analytical decisions. This made the research process more transparent and traceable. Thick contextual description was also provided by describing the Sukabumi context, the roles of women social activists and child protection stakeholders, the MTs school settings, the student participants, and the structure of the classroom intervention. Because the study involved sensitive issues and students under the age of 18, trustworthiness was also connected to ethical protection.

2.8. Ethical Considerations

The study involved sensitive issues and students under the age of 18. Institutional and school permissions were obtained before data collection and classroom implementation. For student participants, approval and consent procedures were coordinated through the participating schools and class teachers according to each school's procedures. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the learning activities, and the use of their responses for research analysis.

Students were not required to disclose personal experiences of violence. Classroom discussions focused on hypothetical scenarios, social analysis, protection awareness, and safe help-seeking. Sensitive topics were discussed using age-appropriate and non-graphic language. Social Studies teachers were present during the intervention to support classroom management, student comfort, and ethical protection.

Participants' personal identities were protected in the research reporting. Student responses were coded to avoid individual identification, and the analysis focused on general patterns of awareness rather than individual cases. Photographs and classroom documentation were used only as supporting evidence of the learning process and were treated with attention to confidentiality and child protection.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are presented thematically by integrating interview data from women social activists and child protection stakeholders, Social Studies teachers, student questionnaire responses, classroom reflections, advocacy outputs, and classroom documentation. To protect participant identities, the findings are presented through thematic summaries, interview-matrix evidence, and selected examples of student responses rather than through identifiable individual quotations.

3.1. Gender Inequality as a Normalized System of Everyday Power Relations

The findings indicate that gender inequality was understood by women social activists and child protection stakeholders as broader than direct discrimination against women and girls. It was embedded in everyday relationships, family expectations, social roles, institutional practices, and unequal power structures that shaped how individuals understood acceptable behavior.

One recurring pattern concerned the normalization of gender expectations. Participants explained that ideas about how girls and boys “should” behave could influence emotional expression, decision-making, relationships, and responses to violence. Girls could be expected to tolerate, remain silent, protect family reputation, or accept unequal control, while boys could experience pressure to appear strong, dominant, or emotionally unaffected. Participants also indicated that gender norms may affect boys, especially when emotional expression is treated as weakness or when boys are expected to appear strong, dominant, and emotionally unaffected.

Table 3 summarizes the main gender inequality themes identified from the activist and stakeholder interview matrix.

Table 3. Gender inequality themes identified from activist and stakeholder perspectives

Theme identified from interview data	Explanation in the Sukabumi context	Relevance for Social Studies learning
Stigma and shame	Violence and gender-related problems may remain hidden because victims or families fear judgment, shame, or social consequences.	Students need to understand that silence is often shaped by social pressure, not simply by individual choice.
Cultural expectations to obey men	Some gender expectations position girls and women as obedient, tolerant, or responsible for maintaining family harmony.	Learning should help students question unequal gender expectations and recognize equal dignity.
Unequal household and social roles	Gender inequality may appear through unequal expectations in family roles, decision-making, and responsibility.	Social Studies can connect gender inequality with family, community, social roles, and power relations.
Economic dependence	Economic vulnerability can limit the ability of women or children to seek protection or leave harmful situations.	Students can learn that violence prevention is connected with broader social and economic conditions.
Intimidation and fear	Fear of perpetrators, family reaction, or community judgment can prevent victims and witnesses from reporting harm.	Active bystander education should include safe reporting and trusted adult support.
Gender expectations affecting boys	Boys may be expected to appear strong, dominant, or emotionally unaffected, making emotional expression difficult.	Gender-sensitive learning should not only present girls as victims and boys as perpetrators, but should examine how gender norms affect all students.
Care confused with control	Monitoring, restricting friendships, checking phones, or demanding constant updates may be justified as affection or protection.	Students need to distinguish healthy care from warning signs and controlling behavior.

This finding became important for the classroom intervention because gender-sensitive violence prevention should not only present girls as victims and boys as perpetrators. It should also help students question restrictive gender expectations that affect all students differently. For example, in classroom reflection, students were invited to respond to gender-stereotypical statements such as “boys should not cry” and to consider whether emotional expression should be limited by gender.

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The participants' perspectives also suggested that the distinction between care and control can become blurred. Restricting someone's social relationships, monitoring communication, checking a phone, demanding constant updates, or making unilateral decisions may sometimes be justified as protection or affection. This insight directly informed the classroom activity that asked students to position relationship scenarios along a continuum from "very caring" to "very controlling." Through this activity, students were encouraged to examine whether a behavior represented care, a warning sign, or controlling behavior.

These findings are significant because inequality is reproduced not only through visible acts of discrimination but also through everyday assumptions that become socially accepted. Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony helps explain this process: unequal social relations may appear natural when particular values are repeatedly reinforced through families, communities, institutions, and cultural practices (Gramsci, 1971). Gender inequality can therefore persist even when individuals do not explicitly identify themselves as supporting discrimination.

From a feminist standpoint perspective, these findings demonstrate the importance of knowledge generated through direct engagement with communities (Harding, 1991). The activists and child protection stakeholders did not describe gender inequality only as an abstract concept. They connected it with practical consequences, including silence, reporting barriers, family pressure, children's vulnerability, institutional responses, and the emotional experiences of people seeking help. Their situated knowledge therefore became an important foundation for developing gender-sensitive Social Studies learning that addressed both structural inequality and students' everyday social realities.

3.2. Violence as an Interconnected Continuum Rather Than Isolated Issues

A second major finding was that different forms of violence and vulnerability were interconnected. Participants discussed bullying, cyberbullying, verbal and psychological violence, sexual violence, domestic violence, trafficking vulnerability, child marriage, unsafe digital environments, and broader family insecurity. These issues were not understood as separate problems, but as part of a continuum of harm shaped by power imbalance, fear, silence, manipulation, and limited access to protection.

These issues did not necessarily occur independently. Vulnerability in one environment could increase risk in another. Family insecurity could affect children's relationships and decision-making; limited awareness could make adolescents vulnerable to manipulation; harmful gender expectations could discourage reporting; and digital communication could extend bullying beyond the physical school environment. For example, a conflict that begins as teasing among peers may become repeated verbal humiliation, social exclusion, or cyberbullying when harmful messages, photos, or videos are spread online. This interpretation is consistent with research showing that bullying and cyberbullying involve peer-group processes, witnessing behavior, and online bystander responsibility (Salmivalli, 2010; García-Díaz et al., 2023; Sobol et al., 2025).

This finding influenced the educational intervention by moving away from teaching violence as a list of unrelated categories. Instead, students were encouraged to examine common elements across situations, including power imbalance, coercion, fear, humiliation, manipulation, lack of meaningful consent, isolation, and restrictions on personal safety. Classroom scenarios therefore included both direct and indirect forms of harm, such as bullying, online humiliation, controlling relationships, unsafe promises from strangers, and pressure not to report violence.

A particularly important theme was underreporting. Participants described various reasons why violence may remain unreported, including shame, fear, stigma, emotional attachment, economic dependence, uncertainty about whether an experience is sufficiently serious, fear of not being believed, and lack of knowledge regarding available assistance. The interview matrix further indicated that underreporting was associated with fear, shame, family pressure, community judgment, lack of trust, limited knowledge of reporting pathways, and uncertainty about where to report. Underreporting therefore cannot be interpreted simply as individual unwillingness to seek help. It is connected with wider social and institutional conditions. From a critical perspective, telling victims merely to "speak

up” may be insufficient when social environments continue to punish disclosure or fail to provide trustworthy support.

This finding also had implications for bystander education. Witnesses may occupy a potentially important position because victims are not always able to seek assistance immediately. However, bystander responsibility must be taught in ways that prioritize safety. In the intervention, students were therefore guided to understand that active bystander action does not always mean direct confrontation. It may include refusing to participate in bullying, not spreading harmful digital content, accompanying a victim, seeking help from a teacher or trusted adult, or using an appropriate reporting pathway.

Research on violence prevention similarly shows that bystander approaches require attention to the conditions that enable or inhibit helping behavior and that greater research is needed to translate awareness into appropriate action (Vázquez-González et al., 2023). In this study, the interconnected nature of violence became a key reason for designing learning activities that helped students recognize warning signs, understand reporting barriers, and identify safe forms of response.

3.3. Child Protection Requires Both Individual Awareness and Collective Support Systems

The participants consistently emphasized that violence prevention should not place responsibility solely on potential victims. Effective child protection requires individual awareness, trusted adults, reporting mechanisms, referral systems, emotional support, schools, families, communities, and relevant institutions. In this study, child protection was therefore understood not only as a legal or institutional responsibility, but also as a shared social responsibility that requires early awareness and safe response.

Several recurring dimensions emerged from stakeholder perspectives:

- a) recognizing signs of violence and vulnerability;
- b) ensuring that children know whom they can trust;
- c) creating safe opportunities to report concerns;
- d) responding without blaming victims;
- e) connecting cases with appropriate professional services;
- f) strengthening communication between schools and families; and
- g) developing community awareness before serious cases occur.

These findings became the foundation of the study’s active bystander approach. Students were not positioned as investigators, rescuers, or substitutes for trained professionals. Instead, active bystander awareness emphasized the ability to recognize concerning situations and identify realistic, age-appropriate, and safe responses. For example, when witnessing bullying, students were encouraged to consider responses such as refusing to participate, accompanying the targeted student, seeking help from a teacher, or reporting the situation to a trusted adult. In cyberbullying situations, students discussed why witnesses should not forward harmful material, laugh at humiliating content, or record incidents for entertainment. Instead, they were encouraged to support the victim, preserve relevant evidence when safe and appropriate, block or report harmful accounts, and seek adult assistance.

This emphasis corresponds with current research showing that positive bystander responses may include reporting and victim support and that support from teachers, parents, and other trusted adults can influence adolescents’ responses in both offline and digital environments (Chen & Wu, 2024; Jia et al., 2023; Waasdorp et al., 2022). In this study, child protection was therefore translated into classroom learning as a combination of awareness, empathy, safe decision-making, and knowledge of trusted support systems.

3.4. Translating Stakeholder Knowledge into Gender-Sensitive Social Studies Education

The findings from women social activists and child protection stakeholders were subsequently compared with Social Studies teacher perspectives. Social Studies teachers generally viewed

contemporary social problems as relevant to the subject because Social Studies examines relationships between individuals, communities, institutions, rights and responsibilities, social change, and citizenship. Teacher perspectives also helped identify how sensitive topics could be introduced in age-appropriate ways and connected to students' everyday experiences.

Teacher interview data confirmed that these issues were relevant to students' daily lives. One teacher identified bullying as a common issue that could be normalized as joking, such as calling friends by their parents' names, while another teacher emphasized cyberbullying and social media behavior as relevant concerns for students (Salmivalli, 2010). These teacher perspectives supported the integration of bullying, cyberbullying, gender relations, child protection, early marriage, and digital safety into Social Studies learning.

The resulting intervention therefore did not treat gender and violence prevention as separate therapeutic or legal topics. Instead, the issues were connected to Social Studies concepts such as social problems, power relations, social institutions, community participation, digital citizenship, and social responsibility. The intervention was implemented in the same three-session structure across the four participating MTs. Each session lasted approximately 3 × 40 minutes and was conducted once a week over approximately three weeks in each school. The core topics, scenarios, and activities were kept consistent across the four schools, while minor facilitation adjustments were made according to classroom dynamics, student readiness, school schedules, and available learning time.

The researcher served as the main facilitator of the intervention. Social Studies teachers were present during the sessions to support classroom management, observe student responses, and provide contextual input when needed. Women activists participated in selected implementation contexts by strengthening the connection between classroom discussion and community-based child protection concerns. Students participated through discussion, scenario analysis, color classification activities, reflection, and advocacy product development.

For example, in the "very caring" to "very controlling" continuum activity, students discussed scenarios such as a friend or partner frequently checking someone's phone, limiting friendships, demanding constant location updates, or claiming that control is a form of protection. Students were asked to decide whether each situation represented care, a warning sign, or controlling behavior, and to explain their reasoning. In bullying and cyberbullying scenarios, students discussed whether witnesses should laugh, remain silent, record the incident, support the victim, refuse to participate, or seek help from a trusted adult.

Table 4 summarizes the relationship between the critical ethnographic findings and their pedagogical translation.

Table 4. Translation of critical ethnographic findings into Social Studies learning

Critical ethnographic finding	Educational focus	Example learning approach
Normalization of harmful gender expectations	Gender stereotypes and equal human dignity	Discussion of statements such as "boys should not cry" and "girls cannot lead"
Confusion between care and control	Healthy, respectful, and controlling relationships	"Very caring" to "very controlling" continuum
Multiple interconnected forms of violence	Violence recognition and warning signs	Case analysis and red-yellow-green classification
Silence and underreporting	Barriers to help-seeking and trusted support	Reflection and reporting-pathway discussion
Importance of safe witnesses	Active bystander decision-making	Bullying and cyberbullying scenarios
Need for collective prevention	Community responsibility and advocacy	Posters and digital campaign activities

Digital vulnerability	Responsible participation in Cyberbullying and digital safety cases online environments
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This process demonstrates the practical value of situated practitioner knowledge for curriculum development. Rather than creating educational materials solely from general definitions, the intervention was developed around problems and dilemmas identified by people working directly in child protection. This approach is consistent with Feminist Standpoint Theory, which emphasizes the value of situated knowledge produced through lived and professional engagement with inequality (Harding, 1991). Freire’s critical pedagogy also provides an important framework for interpreting this approach because education should not position students merely as recipients of information, but as learners who examine social realities, question normalized assumptions, and consider how they can participate responsibly in their communities (Freire, 1970).

Consequently, the intervention relied on discussion, scenarios, decision-making, visual classification, reflection, and advocacy rather than lecture alone. Students were encouraged not simply to memorize categories of violence but to ask questions such as: What makes this situation harmful? What signs should a witness notice? Why might a person be afraid to seek help? What could make intervention unsafe? Who can provide appropriate assistance? This emphasis is also consistent with bystander education research, which stresses the importance of preparing young people to recognize harm and identify safe, realistic responses rather than encouraging unsafe direct confrontation (Banyard et al., 2007; Kettrey et al., 2019; Vázquez-González et al., 2023).

3.5. From General Willingness to More Structured Bystander Reasoning

Comparison of students’ pre- and post-intervention responses indicated a qualitative development in their reasoning. Before the intervention, many responses demonstrated general prosocial intentions. Students commonly expressed that they would “help,” “stop it,” or “tell someone” when witnessing harmful behavior. However, these responses were often broad and did not clearly explain how help should be offered safely.

Following the intervention, responses became more differentiated and safety-oriented. Students increasingly identified specific strategies such as not joining or encouraging bullying, supporting and accompanying the victim, calming a distressed peer, informing a teacher or homeroom teacher, approaching school counseling personnel where available, telling parents or another trusted adult, and avoiding direct confrontation when a situation could become dangerous.

For example, in response to a bullying scenario, initial answers tended to be short and general, such as “help the victim” or “tell them to stop.” After the intervention, students more frequently gave structured responses such as refusing to join the bullying, accompanying the targeted student, and reporting the situation to a teacher or trusted adult. In cyberbullying scenarios, post-intervention responses also showed stronger awareness that students should not spread harmful content and should seek adult assistance. This development is consistent with research showing that bystander responses are shaped by peer roles, school climate, adult support, and students’ ability to recognize harmful situations (Salmivalli, 2010; Waasdorp et al., 2022; García-Díaz et al., 2023).

Student response data also showed this shift. Before the intervention, many students understood violence mainly as physical harm, such as hitting, kicking, pushing, or slapping. After the intervention, students more often recognized broader forms of harm, including verbal violence, emotional violence, bullying, cyberbullying, social exclusion, threats, and violence in digital spaces. Students also became more able to mention safer helping actions, such as accompanying victims, calming victims, giving emotional support, reporting to teachers or trusted adults, asking for help from a homeroom teacher or guidance counselor, and not joining bullying.

Table 5. Patterns of student awareness before and after the intervention

Dimension	Initial pattern	Post-intervention pattern	Example of response development
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Recognition of violence	Focused mainly on obvious physical harm	Greater recognition of verbal, psychological, social, sexual, and digital harm	From “violence means hitting” to recognizing mocking, threats, exclusion, control, and harmful online actions as forms of violence
Bystander response	General statements such as “help” or “stop it”	More specific, staged, and safety-oriented responses	From “help the victim” to “do not join, accompany the victim, and report to a teacher”
Reporting	Limited or uncertain identification of reporting options	Greater identification of teachers, trusted adults, school personnel, and protection pathways	From “tell someone” to “tell the homeroom teacher, parents, or another trusted adult”
Gender stereotypes	Some stereotypical assumptions remained unexamined	Stronger questioning of restrictive gender expectations	From accepting “boys should be strong” to recognizing that boys can express sadness and should not be mocked
Care and control	Potential difficulty distinguishing protective behavior from control	Greater recognition of warning signs and controlling behavior	From seeing phone-checking as care to recognizing repeated monitoring as possible control
Victim support	Focus on stopping the incident	Greater attention to accompanying, listening to, and supporting the affected person	From “stop the bully” to “stay with the victim and help them find a trusted adult”
Digital responsibility	Limited discussion of witness responsibility online	Greater recognition of not sharing harmful content and seeking assistance	From “delete it” to “do not share, save evidence if safe, and report to an adult”
Advocacy	Primarily individual responses	Greater recognition of collective awareness and prevention	From “I will help” to creating campaign messages about safe friendships, anti-bullying, and reporting

One notable development concerned gender stereotypes. Post-intervention reflections demonstrated greater willingness to reject statements implying that emotional expression is inappropriate for boys or that gender should determine who deserves protection, respect, or the freedom to express vulnerability. This change is educationally important because gender-sensitive violence prevention requires more than presenting girls as potential victims and boys as potential perpetrators (Vazquez-Gonzalez et al., 2023). A gender-sensitive approach should recognize that unequal gender norms affect all students differently while also enabling critical discussion of structural inequalities and the particular vulnerabilities experienced by women and girls.

The intervention also emphasized that empathy alone is insufficient unless students understand how to act safely. A student may care about a victim but remain uncertain about what to do. The post-intervention responses suggested movement from emotional willingness toward practical reasoning. Students became more able to identify whom to contact, how to avoid reinforcing harm, and why seeking adult assistance can be an active and responsible form of bystander action.

This finding is consistent with broader research emphasizing the importance of contextual and social factors in bystander behavior. Bystander intervention should not be understood as an automatic consequence of knowing that violence is wrong. Young people need supportive environments, confidence, realistic strategies, and trusted adults to whom concerns can be reported (Banyard et al., 2007; Waasdorp et al., 2022; Chen & Wu, 2024; Cohane & Schneider, 2024; Jia et al., 2023).

3.6. Recognition Is the First Stage of Active Bystander Awareness

The findings further indicate that recognition is foundational to active bystander responsibility. A student cannot respond appropriately to a situation that they interpret as normal, harmless, or only joking. For this reason, the intervention repeatedly asked students to differentiate among safe, concerning, and dangerous situations. This emphasis is consistent with research showing that students' responses to bullying and cyberbullying depend partly on their ability to recognize harm, interpret peer roles, and understand online witness responsibility (Salmivalli, 2010; García-Díaz et al., 2023; Sobol et al., 2025).

The red-yellow-green activity was particularly useful because it allowed students to examine ambiguity rather than categorizing all situations simply as "good" or "bad." Green represented safe or respectful behavior, yellow represented warning signs, and red represented harmful or dangerous behavior. Through this activity, students discussed examples such as teasing that becomes repeated humiliation, a friend being excluded from a group, someone being pressured to share private photos, or a person being controlled through constant phone checking.

Some situations did not involve direct physical violence but still contained warning signs such as increasing control, isolation, threatening language, pressure, manipulation, humiliation, or fear. Recognizing these warning signs was important because prevention requires students to notice harm before it becomes more serious.

Similarly, the "very caring" to "very controlling" continuum created space for students to examine how behaviors may be interpreted differently depending on context, consent, power, and frequency (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). For example, students discussed whether checking someone's phone, limiting friendships, demanding location updates, or deciding whom someone may talk to should be understood as care or control. This activity was directly connected to the critical ethnographic finding that controlling behavior may sometimes be normalized through the language of protection or affection.

The educational value of these activities lies in developing judgment rather than memorization. Students were encouraged to justify their classifications, listen to different opinions, and reconsider their initial interpretations. This approach reflects the critical pedagogical principle of problem-posing education. Rather than giving students fixed answers for every scenario, the learning process encouraged them to examine power, consequences, safety, and responsibility (Freire, 1970).

3.7. Active Bystander Education Must Prioritize Safe Action

An important contribution of this study is the distinction between active intervention and direct confrontation. In violence-prevention education, the phrase "be brave" may unintentionally imply that young people should physically intervene in dangerous situations. The present study instead framed active bystander responsibility as choosing an appropriate and safe response.

Safe bystander action may include refusing to participate in harmful behavior, supporting a person experiencing harm, seeking assistance from a trusted adult, reporting the situation through appropriate channels, preserving relevant information when safe and appropriate, interrupting a harmful interaction indirectly, and encouraging collective responsibility rather than leaving the victim isolated. This understanding is consistent with bystander education research, which emphasizes that prevention programs should help learners recognize harm and identify realistic, safe, and context-sensitive responses (Banyard et al., 2007; Kettrey et al., 2019; Vázquez-González et al., 2023).

In classroom scenarios, students were asked to consider what they could do if they witnessed bullying, cyberbullying, controlling behavior, or unsafe peer pressure. For example, when witnessing bullying, safe responses included not laughing, not joining the bullying, accompanying the victim, and reporting the situation to a teacher or homeroom teacher. In cyberbullying situations, students were encouraged not to forward harmful photos or messages, not to comment in ways that worsen the harm, and to seek help from a trusted adult (Banyard et al., 2007).

This understanding is also consistent with research showing that school-based violence-prevention programs can create opportunities for prevention, although their effects must be understood within specific social settings and should not be assumed to operate identically for every

student (Melendez-Torres et al., 2023). For the students in this study, the most important educational development was not a promise that they would always intervene directly. Rather, it was an increased ability to identify a range of possible responses and to understand that seeking adult assistance can itself be an active and responsible form of bystander action. This is especially important because the participants were students under the age of 18, and their safety must remain central in any violence-prevention learning.

3.8. Student Advocacy as a Form of Reflection and Social Participation

The advocacy component extended learning beyond individual questionnaire responses. Students created messages related to bullying prevention, child protection, gender equality, safe relationships, and active bystander responsibility through paper posters, digital posters, website-style designs, and other creative formats.

These outputs were treated primarily as reflective evidence of students' developing understanding rather than as formally scored artistic products. The advocacy activities served three pedagogical purposes. First, students had to identify the central message they wanted others to understand. This required them to synthesize what they had learned rather than repeat definitions. Second, they had to consider how messages might influence peers. This connected Social Studies learning with communication, digital citizenship, and public participation. Third, students were positioned as contributors to prevention rather than only as potential victims.

The intervention therefore moved from recognizing social problems toward considering how young people can participate in creating safer social environments. This reflects the critical pedagogical idea that learning should connect reflection with responsible action, rather than remain limited to passive reception of information (Freire, 1970). This does not mean that children should carry institutional responsibility for preventing violence. Schools, families, governments, and protection institutions retain essential responsibilities. However, students can contribute to cultures in which harmful behavior is less likely to be normalized and in which seeking help is treated as responsible rather than shameful.

3.9. Interpreting the Findings through Feminist Standpoint Theory

Feminist Standpoint Theory explains why the perspectives of women social activists and child protection stakeholders were central to this study. Their knowledge emerged through direct engagement with children, women, families, communities, and protection systems. This position enabled them to identify not only the existence of violence, but also the social processes surrounding it, such as silence, stigma, family pressure, fear of reporting, victim-blaming, and limited access to trusted support (Harding, 1991).

For example, official categories may identify a case as sexual violence, domestic violence, trafficking, bullying, or child marriage. However, practitioner perspectives can explain why victims or witnesses remain silent, how families respond, what cultural assumptions influence the case, and what forms of support are needed. In this study, such situated knowledge helped identify the educational themes that entered the Social Studies intervention, including care and control, safe reporting, bullying and cyberbullying, gender stereotypes, and active bystander responsibility.

The research therefore did not treat women activists and child protection stakeholders only as informants. Their experiences were used as situated knowledge for developing educational priorities. This standpoint-informed approach strengthened the connection between community-based child protection knowledge and gender-sensitive Social Studies learning (Banyard et al., 2007).

3.10. Interpreting the Findings through Critical Pedagogy

Critical Pedagogy helps explain the educational process used in the intervention. The study did not position students as passive recipients of information about violence, gender, and child protection. Instead, students were invited to analyze social problems, question normalized assumptions, and consider safe forms of responsibility.

This was reflected in the classroom activities. Scenario discussions allowed students to identify power relations and warning signs. The red-yellow-green activity encouraged students to distinguish

safe, concerning, and harmful situations. The “very caring” to “very controlling” continuum helped students question whether certain behaviors represented care or control. Bystander cases required students to consider responsibility together with safety, while advocacy outputs allowed them to communicate prevention messages to others.

The learning process therefore moved from awareness to reflection and possible social participation. This is consistent with Freire’s concept of praxis, which connects reflection with action (Freire, 1970). In this study, praxis was shown through students’ movement from general statements such as “help the victim” toward more specific responses, such as refusing to join bullying, accompanying the victim, reporting to a teacher or trusted adult, and avoiding unsafe direct confrontation.

3.11. Interpreting the Findings through Cultural Hegemony

Gramsci’s concept of cultural hegemony helps explain why gender inequality and violence prevention require attention to normalization. Harmful behavior does not become socially tolerated only through direct coercion. It may also become accepted when unequal assumptions are repeatedly represented as normal, traditional, protective, humorous, or unavoidable (Gramsci, 1971).

The critical ethnographic findings showed several forms of normalization, including silence surrounding violence, gender stereotypes about boys’ and girls’ behavior, control interpreted as care, victim-blaming, and the belief that witnesses should avoid involvement. These patterns are important because they can make students interpret harmful behavior as ordinary or not serious.

The educational intervention attempted to interrupt these forms of normalization by creating opportunities for students to name, classify, and question them. For example, students discussed whether repeated teasing should still be considered joking, whether checking someone’s phone should be understood as care or control, and whether forwarding harmful online content makes a witness part of the problem. These activities helped students see that everyday peer responses can either reinforce harm or support prevention.

From this perspective, active bystander education has a broader social function. A bystander does not only decide whether to respond to an individual incident. Collective bystander behavior also contributes to social norms. When peers laugh at humiliation, forward harmful content, or remain approvingly silent, they can reinforce the environment in which violence occurs. When peers refuse participation, support affected individuals, and seek assistance, they communicate an alternative social norm.

Research on school-based anti-violence approaches similarly highlights the importance of mobilizing peer environments rather than viewing violence solely as a relationship between an individual perpetrator and victim (Cohane & Schneider, 2024; Gaffney et al., 2021; Gairal-Casadó et al., 2026; Gómez et al., 2025).

3.12. Implications for Gender-Sensitive Social Studies Education

The findings suggest several implications for Social Studies education. First, gender-sensitive education should be integrated with broader discussions of social problems rather than treated as an isolated topic. Gender inequality intersects with family relations, institutions, economic vulnerability, community norms, digital communication, and citizenship. Therefore, Social Studies provides a relevant space for discussing these issues as part of students’ understanding of society.

Second, local social knowledge can strengthen curriculum relevance. The perspectives of women social activists and child protection stakeholders helped identify issues that were meaningful in the Sukabumi context, including bullying, cyberbullying, underreporting, care and control, child marriage, unsafe relationships, and safe reporting pathways. This indicates that collaboration with community organizations and protection practitioners can help educators connect classroom learning with students’ social realities.

Third, violence-prevention education should move beyond definitions. Students require opportunities to analyze realistic scenarios, recognize ambiguity, consider consequences, and identify safe responses. The red-yellow-green activity, the “very caring” to “very controlling” continuum,

bullying and cyberbullying scenarios, and advocacy outputs show how Social Studies learning can support students' active bystander awareness in participatory ways. This implication is consistent with research showing that bystander responses are shaped by peer roles, school climate, adult support, and students' recognition of harmful situations (Salmivalli, 2010; Waasdorp et al., 2022; García-Díaz et al., 2023; Chen & Wu, 2024).

Fourth, active bystander education should emphasize collective responsibility without placing unreasonable responsibility on children. Students should understand that asking for adult help is an active response and that personal safety remains important. This is especially important in MTs contexts because students are under the age of 18 and should not be positioned as substitutes for teachers, parents, protection workers, or formal institutions.

Fifth, teachers require flexibility. Sensitive topics require adaptation according to students' age, school context, available support systems, and the teacher's professional judgment. Therefore, the intervention should be understood as a contextual example from which pedagogical recommendations can be developed, rather than as a fixed program that must be reproduced identically in every school.

4. CONCLUSION

This study explored how the situated knowledge of women social activists and child protection stakeholders in Sukabumi could inform gender-sensitive Social Studies education for active bystander and violence-prevention awareness. The findings show that gender inequality and child protection issues are interconnected through patriarchal expectations, unequal power relations, harmful gender stereotypes, vulnerability, underreporting, and limited knowledge of safe reporting pathways.

The novelty of this study lies in translating field-based child protection knowledge into a three-session Social Studies intervention implemented through Emancipatory Action Research in four MTs. The intervention connected gender-sensitive understanding, violence recognition, child protection, safe bystander decision-making, and advocacy. Students' pre- and post-intervention responses indicated a shift from general willingness to help toward more specific and safety-oriented reasoning, such as supporting victims, refusing to participate in harmful behavior, seeking trusted adults, and recognizing warning signs of control and violence.

The study suggests that Social Studies can serve as a meaningful space for connecting critical understanding of inequality with practical social responsibility. However, the findings should not be interpreted as proof of sustained behavioral change or causal intervention effectiveness. Future research should examine longer-term implementation, teacher-led adaptation, wider school contexts, and students' application of bystander knowledge in real school and digital environments.

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