

Comprehensive Teacher Training Program to Promote the Empowerment and Resilience of Students Who Are Victims of Violence

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.66615/1qjvad41>

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Received: 2026-07-26 Accepted: 2026-08-20 Publish: 2026-09-06

Abstract

Keywords:
Comprehensive program; teacher training; victims of violence; victim identification.

The objective of this research was to design a comprehensive teacher training program focused on strengthening empowerment and resilience in students who are victims of domestic and school violence in educational institutions in Líbano, Tolima; the study was developed using a qualitative approach, an interpretive paradigm, and a hermeneutic phenomenological method, of a projective type, employing semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation—with instruments validated through expert judgment—and document analysis as theoretical support for triangulation—to understand teachers' experiences in supporting these students. Data were gathered from nine key-informant teachers (one per campus) and analyzed through thematic categorization and triangulation with the support of MAXQDA software. The results highlighted the need to strengthen teachers' pedagogical, emotional, psychosocial, and legal competencies to respond appropriately to contexts of child violence; based on these findings, the Comprehensive Teacher Training Program for Empowerment and Resilience (PICDER) was structured into seven training components and integrated with a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Continuous

Improvement Methodology (MEMC-PICDER); the study concludes that comprehensive teacher training can significantly contribute to building safer, more resilient, and more humane school environments, promoting the well-being and holistic development of children.

1. INTRODUCTION

Domestic and school violence constitutes one of the most concerning social issues within contemporary educational contexts, due to the profound emotional, cognitive, and social impacts it generates in children and adolescents. According to the Inspector General's Office (Procuraduría General de la Nación, 2023), figures related to physical, sexual, and domestic violence against minors in Colombia demonstrate a critical scenario that directly affects the well-being and holistic development of children. Similarly, the Ombudsman's Office (Defensoría del Pueblo, 2022) warns of a significant increase in reports of child abuse, reflecting the urgent need to strengthen prevention and protection mechanisms across educational and social institutions.

In light of current conditions, schools are assuming an increasingly relevant role, serving as one of the primary environments for early detection of violence and for supporting students who have been victimized. In this context, authors such as Roperó (2017) and Roeders et al. (2024) point out that teachers play an essential role in detecting signs of physical, emotional, and behavioral maltreatment in minors, owing to their continuous interaction with students. However, teachers' insufficient preparation to adequately address situations of violence and school coexistence represents one of the main difficulties and constrains institutional capacity to intervene in a timely manner (Barbeito, 2021). In this sense, contemporary educational systems require educators equipped with skills and abilities that enable them to respond not only to academic demands, but also to the emotional and social needs of students (UNESCO, 2024).

Considering the above, this research aimed to design a comprehensive teacher-training program geared toward strengthening empowerment and resilience among student victims of domestic and school violence. The study was conducted in official primary and secondary education institutions in the municipality of Líbano, Tolima, during the 2023–2025 period, and is relevant given that school and family violence remains an issue that, according to the Government of Tolima (Gobernación del Tolima, 2024), continues to affect the department's child population, consequently impacting school coexistence and adaptation.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was conducted under a qualitative approach, as it sought to understand the experiences, perceptions, and meanings constructed by teachers regarding the support provided to students who are victims of domestic and school violence. This approach enabled the interpretation of educational reality from the participants' perspective, recognizing the complexity of the social and emotional phenomena present within school contexts. This aligns with Creswell and Creswell (2023), who state that qualitative research allows for the in-depth exploration of human phenomena within their natural settings, fostering the interpretation of experiences and behaviors from a contextualized perspective.

The study was framed within the interpretive paradigm, aimed at understanding social realities through the subjective experiences of the actors involved; from this perspective, it sought to interpret the dynamics of violence and teachers' training needs based on the lived experiences and reflections constructed within the educational environment. Hernández Sampieri et al. (2014) state that the interpretive paradigm enables the understanding of social phenomena through the interaction between subjects and their context, prioritizing the analysis of meanings and experiences over the quantitative measurement of variables.

Methodologically, the research adopted a phenomenological method with a hermeneutic orientation, as it focused on analyzing the lived experiences of teachers regarding the care and support of student victims of violence. This method allowed for a deeper examination of the interpretations, emotions, and meanings constructed by participants in relation to their pedagogical practice and the challenges present in the school context. This is consistent with Creswell and Creswell (2023), who explain that phenomenology seeks to understand the essence of shared human experiences, whereas hermeneutics facilitates the interpretation of discourses and meanings constructed by subjects within a specific social reality. The research design was projective (Hurtado de Barrera, 2024; Hurtado de Barrera & Barrera Morales, 2025), in that the training proposal was constructed based on the diagnostic assessment of reality.

The research setting was the Institución Educativa Técnica Isidro Parra, comprising nine urban and rural branches in the municipality of Líbano, Tolima. From a population of 52 teachers, nine key informants, one from each branch, were selected through non-probabilistic purposive sampling, based on criteria of a minimum tenure of two years at the branch and voluntary willingness to participate. To preserve confidentiality,

participants were identified using pseudonyms.

Regarding data collection techniques, semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation were employed, alongside a documentary analysis conducted under the PRISMA protocol, which served as theoretical support and a contrast element for triangulation; the instruments were validated through expert judgment prior to their application. These techniques yielded comprehensive, contextualized data on teaching experiences, school dynamics related to child violence, and the competencies teachers require to address these realities. In this regard, authors such as González-Vega et al. (2022) highlight that qualitative interviews constitute a fundamental tool for exploring perceptions, experiences, and meanings through the voice of the participants. Similarly, Ramírez López (2018) indicates that non-participant observation facilitates a direct understanding of social and educational contexts, enabling the identification of behaviors, interactions, and situations relevant to investigative analysis.

Finally, data analysis was carried out through thematic categorization, triangulation, and data interpretation processes, supported by the MAXQDA qualitative analysis software, which enabled the organization, coding, and visualization of the corpus within a three-level coding system, aiming to build a comprehensive understanding of the studied phenomenon and to design a training proposal pertinent to the educational context of the municipality of Líbano, Tolima. Hurtado de Barrera (2024) explains that projective research allows for the design of intervention proposals based on the diagnosis and analysis of concrete problems; in this sense, the investigation culminated in the structuring of a comprehensive teacher-training program geared toward strengthening pedagogical, emotional, and socio-affective competencies to promote child resilience and empowerment.

Table 1.

MAXQDA coding system: categories, subcategories, and codes (N=66 segments)

Category (Level 1)	Subcategory (Level 2)	Code (Level 3)	Seg.
C1. Domestic violence	<i>C1.1 Detection of signs of maltreatment</i>	Social withdrawal	5
		Aggressiveness or irritability	4
		Low self-esteem and isolation	4
		Decline in academic performance	3
	<i>C1.2 Socio-affective</i>	Empathy and active listening	5

	<i>competencies</i>	Assertive communication with families	4
		Sustained emotional accompaniment	4
	<i>C1.3 Institutional pathways and protocols</i>	Activation of the care pathway	4
		Family neglect and emotional abandonment	3
		Lack of knowledge of legal procedures	3
C2. School violence	<i>C2.1 Classroom manifestations</i>	Peer coexistence conflicts	5
		Intimidation and school bullying	4
		Social exclusion and maladaptation	3
	<i>C2.2 Teacher emotional management</i>	Emotion management in crisis situations	5
		Child resilience: strengthening strategies	4
		Construction of safe school environments	4
	<i>C2.3 Pedagogical and legal competencies</i>	Continuous training in violence prevention	4
		Pedagogical tools for victim support	3
		Comprehensive child protection (legal framework)	3

Note. Own elaboration based on the MAXQDA analysis (2024). Seg. = number of coded segments.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results were analyzed from a phenomenological-hermeneutic perspective, carried out across two articulated phases: a descriptive phase, aimed at accessing lived experiences as they are signified by the participants, and an interpretive phase, directed toward unveiling the underlying meanings of these experiences in light of the institutional context and scientific literature. The data collected through the semi-structured interviews and field notes derived from non-participant observation were integrated into the same analytical corpus, allowing the teachers' discourse to be contrasted with observed practices. The organization, coding, and visualization of the data were performed using MAXQDA software, providing the empirical foundation for the construction of the PICDER. To facilitate analysis and coding, responses to each interview question were managed in separate documents. Consequently, a total of 66 information segments were coded, organized into a three-level coding system.

The results of this categorization and coding process revealed that teachers' training needs regarding the care and support of child victims of violence are structured around two core categories: domestic violence and school violence. These constitute a structural problem that significantly impairs the emotional, academic, and social well-being of children and adolescents within the educational institutions of the municipality of Líbano, Tolima. Emerging from these central categories are subcategories that encompass the competencies and knowledge teachers require to intervene appropriately in contexts of child vulnerability.

The analysis of the participating teachers' responses established that a large proportion of students exposed to contexts of violence manifest difficulties related to social withdrawal, aggressiveness, low self-esteem, coexistence issues, and declining academic performance; these perceptions align with the statements of the Government of Tolima (Gobernación del Tolima, 2024), which notes that vulnerability dynamics within the department directly impact the school adaptation processes and emotional development of the child population. Likewise, Caicedo-Mera et al. (2026) acknowledge that child maltreatment adversely affects students' learning capabilities, socialization, and emotional stability, comprehensively hindering their development within the school setting.

One of the principal findings of this research concerned the training limitations that many teachers face when dealing with child violence within the classroom. Participants stated that, although they identify behavioral and emotional changes in certain students, they often lack sufficient pedagogical, emotional, or legal tools to intervene appropriately or to activate institutional care pathways. This outcome is closely related to the findings of Ropero (2017) and Walsh et al. (2023), who emphasize that a substantial portion of the teaching workforce has not received specific training on child maltreatment during their professional education. Similarly, UNESCO (2022) indicates that a significant proportion of educators globally have acquired knowledge concerning school coexistence and violence solely through practical experience, without structured institutional training processes.

Furthermore, it was evident that teachers recognize the need to strengthen competencies associated with empathy, active listening, assertive communication, and emotion regulation, as these are critical elements for guiding and assisting student victims of violence. Participants emphasized that emotional difficulties within the classroom require the teacher's role to transcend the transmission of academic content and expand into

human and socio-emotional accompaniment. This agrees with UNESCO (2024), which posits that modern education requires teachers equipped with the capacity to respond to the social and emotional needs of students, ultimately fostering protective and resilient environments for vulnerable children and adolescents (Cipriano et al., 2023; UNICEF, 2025).

In a similar vein, the results demonstrated that educational institutions assume functions of emotional containment and social protection in the face of problems originating in complex family and community settings. Teachers indicated that they must frequently mediate situations involving family neglect, psychological abuse, emotional abandonment, and domestic conflict, which directly impact school coexistence. These findings coincide with those reported by the Government of Tolima (Gobernación del Tolima, 2019), which recognizes that factors such as poverty, social exclusion, and family breakdown foster environments of violence and child rights violations. Similarly, the Municipal Mayor's Office of Líbano (Alcaldía Municipal de Líbano, 2023) warns that the psychosocial issues present in the municipality continue to affect children and adolescents, causing repercussions in their emotional stability and academic performance. Another salient aspect identified in the findings was the importance teachers place on establishing safe, emotionally protective school environments as a strategy to foster child resilience; participants highlighted that many students find school to be one of the few spaces where they feel heard, valued, and emotionally supported. This perception is consistent with observations by Chatterjee and Duraiappah (2020) and UNESCO (2025), who emphasize the role of educational institutions in reinforcing socio-emotional learning and students' comprehensive well-being. Likewise, studies by DiMarzio et al. (2025), Goetschius et al. (2023), and UNICEF (2021) acknowledge that schools can become protective environments capable of contributing significantly to the emotional and social reconstruction of children who are victims of violence and exclusion.

The findings also revealed that teachers consider the institutional strategies currently implemented to address child violence and school coexistence to be insufficient; although protocols and care pathways exist, participants stated that these processes are often limited to administrative procedures without providing sustained pedagogical and emotional accompaniment over time. This circumstance aligns with UNESCO (2022), which indicates that the existence of institutional protocols alone does not ensure an effective response to school violence unless accompanied by continuous teacher professional development and institutional strengthening. Similarly, Ropero (2017) and Al-Waly and Ma'ala (2021) warn that a lack of familiarity with operational procedures

considerably restricts teachers' ability to intervene promptly in situations involving rights violations.

Moreover, the necessity of implementing educational strategies to reinforce teachers' competencies through continuous professional development programs focused on emotional regulation, violence prevention, psychosocial support, and the promotion of child resilience became evident. This is particularly critical considering that traditional teacher education focuses on curricular and disciplinary dimensions, neglecting the development of skills for emotional management and for supporting victims in vulnerable conditions. This finding concurs with the OECD (2021), which highlights that teacher professional development plays a vital role in building capacities to respond timely and appropriately within complex educational environments. Similarly, the World Bank (2023) notes that continuous training processes facilitate the transformation of pedagogical practices and strengthen learning environments.

On the other hand, it was identified that resilience is a capacity that can be fostered within the school environment through pedagogical strategies oriented toward emotional accompaniment, personal validation, and student participation. Participating teachers pointed out that child victims of violence can undergo processes of recovery and emotional reconstruction when they encounter an environment of support, validation, and trust within the school. This aligns with Zimmerman (1995), who explains that psychological empowerment enhances perceived control, self-esteem, and the ability to cope with adverse situations. Furthermore, Zimmerman (2000) indicates that strengthening individual and community empowerment fosters the transformation of vulnerable social contexts. In addition, the findings interface with Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory, Cyrulnik's Resilience Tutors Theory, and Nussbaum's Capability Approach, which substantiate the proposed training model.

This identification of training needs enabled the consolidation of the Comprehensive Teacher Training Program for Empowerment and Resilience (PICDER, by its Spanish acronym), a systemic, institution-level training model focused on strengthening teachers' pedagogical, psychosocial, and legal competencies to respond promptly in scenarios of school and domestic violence. The program is organized into seven training components, each articulated with a need identified in the empirical analysis, and is grounded in Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow), Resilience Tutors Theory (Cyrulnik), the Capability Approach (Nussbaum), and the Comprehensive Child Protection perspective. Additionally, it incorporates the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Continuous Improvement Methodology (MEMC-PICDER), which represents a distinguishing element compared to

previous training program proposals that lack an evaluative component.

Finally, this study concludes that comprehensive teacher training constitutes a fundamental strategy for strengthening the protection of children's rights and promoting resilient, inclusive, and humanizing school environments. The findings facilitated the structuring of a training proposal aimed at enhancing pedagogical, emotional, legal, and socio-affective competencies among teachers in the municipality of Líbano, Tolima. This proposal seeks to transcend traditional training models focused solely on academic content by integrating tools targeted toward violence prevention, emotional support, and the cultivation of school cultures centered on empathy and peaceful coexistence. In this regard, UNESCO (2024) recognizes that contemporary educational transformation demands teacher education models capable of responding comprehensively to the social and emotional challenges present in today's school environments.

CONCLUSIONS

The present investigation concludes that domestic and school violence continues to constitute a structural problem that profoundly affects the comprehensive development of children and adolescents within the educational contexts of the municipality of Líbano, Tolima. The findings evidenced that the emotional, social, and academic consequences stemming from these situations of violence directly impact school coexistence, academic performance, and students' adaptation processes. Furthermore, it was identified that educational institutions have become fundamental environments for early detection and for supporting vulnerable students, owing to the continuous contact teachers maintain with them. In this sense, the school cannot be limited solely to fulfilling traditional academic functions; rather, it must consolidate itself as a protective, humanizing space oriented toward strengthening the emotional and social well-being of children.

Likewise, the research established a significant need to strengthen teachers' pedagogical, emotional, legal, and psychosocial competencies in the face of child violence contexts. The results demonstrated that many teachers recognize signs of emotional and behavioral distress in students, but frequently lack sufficient tools to intervene appropriately or develop sustained accompaniment strategies over time; this situation evidences that traditional teacher training remains primarily centered on curricular and disciplinary aspects, leaving substantial gaps related to violence prevention, emotional regulation, resilience, and socio-affective support. Therefore, strengthening teaching capacities constitutes a priority need to respond comprehensively to the social and emotional problems present within contemporary educational institutions.

Furthermore, the study concluded that child empowerment and resilience can be significantly fostered from within the school context when pedagogical environments based on empathy, active listening, emotional protection, and student participation are established. The participating teachers recognized that many children who are victims of violence find in the school one of the few spaces where they can feel safe, valued, and emotionally supported, highlighting the enormous transformative potential of educational institutions in the face of contexts of social and family vulnerability. Consequently, the construction of resilient school environments does not depend solely on the application of institutional protocols, but also on the teachers' ability to generate humanizing pedagogical relationships that foster trust, emotional stability, and the holistic development of students.

Lastly, the research facilitated the structuring of the Comprehensive Teacher Training Program for Empowerment and Resilience (PICDER, by its Spanish acronym), aimed at strengthening pedagogical, emotional, psychosocial, legal, and socio-affective competencies for supporting students who are victims of domestic and school violence. This proposal represents a significant contribution both to the educational context of the municipality of Líbano, Tolima, and to future research and teacher-training programs focused on school coexistence and child protection. It is concluded that comprehensive teacher training constitutes a fundamental strategy for advancing toward educational models that are more inclusive, sensitive, and committed to guaranteeing the rights of children and adolescents. In this regard, the research reaffirms the need to continue promoting policies and training processes that enable the transformation of school dynamics and the consolidation of an educational culture based on peace, resilience, empathy, and comprehensive child protection.

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