

Collaborative Strategies in Self-Protection against Sexual Violence for Children with Intellectual Disabilities: Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract: This study explores collaborative strategies based on the Pentahelix model to enhance self-protection education against sexual violence for children with intellectual disabilities. Recognizing the heightened vulnerability of this population and the fragmented nature of existing protective mechanisms, this research adopts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method guided by PRISMA protocols. A total of 25 peer-reviewed, Scopus-indexed articles published between 2015 and 2024 were thematically analyzed. The findings reveal that multi-actor collaboration involving government, academia, communities, the private sector, and media plays a pivotal role in establishing responsive protection systems and educational interventions tailored to the specific needs of children with intellectual disabilities. This integrative approach addresses long-standing gaps in protection efforts by fostering shared responsibility, localized implementation, and sustainable program development. However, several challenges persist, including inadequate teacher training, cultural resistance to sexuality education, lack of adaptive teaching materials, and institutional dependency. These barriers limit the effectiveness and scalability of existing programs, especially in resource-constrained settings. The conceptual framework proposed in this study provides a foundation for future empirical research and offers practical guidance for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders aiming to strengthen inclusive and rights-based child protection systems. Although focused on the Indonesian context, the insights generated are relevant and potentially adaptable to other low- and middle-income countries facing similar structural and cultural constraints.

Keywords: Pentahelix; intellectual disability; child sexual abuse; child protection.

INTRODUCTION

The issues of sexual violence against children with intellectual disabilities is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence against children. In spite of growing attention, significant gaps persist in providing adequate protection and self-protection education for children with intellectual disabilities. Children with intellectual disabilities are disproportionately vulnerable to sexual violence compared to typically developing children (Hartwig & McMullen, 2021). They face various barriers in understanding self-protection concepts (Yektaoglu, 2021), identifying forms of abuse, and communicating their experiences to adults (Franklin & Smeaton, 2017). Hughes et al. (2012) found that the risk of sexual violence for children with intellectual disabilities can be up to three times higher than that of the general population (Kucuk et al., 2017). In Indonesia, the absence of a responsive protection system that to the needs of children with intellectual disabilities, along with limited education on self-protection, further exacerbates this issue (Jones et al., 2012).

Cases of sexual violence against children with intellectual disabilities have emerged in various regions, there were 22 cases of sexual violence against people with intellectual disabilities in eight provinces in Indonesia (Pitaloka et al., 2025). For example, in 2022, a girl with an intellectual disability in Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta, became a victim of sexual abuse by her neighbour. The case drew public attention due to the victim's difficulty in articulating her experience and the authorities' slow response caused by a lack of understanding of the characteristics of children with intellectual disabilities. In East Java, a local NGO reported that more than 30% of children with intellectual disabilities who participated in self-protection

training had experienced some form of sexual abuse (Buckley, 2007), occurring in settings such as the home, school, or community. Similar data were presented by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI), which noted that in 2021, approximately 12% of reported child sexual abuse cases involved children with intellectual disabilities (Jones et al., 2012).

The results of a study conducted by the city of Pekanbaru showed that sexual and reproductive health education in schools was still limited to aspects of human anatomy and physiology content. However, other aspects such as sexual and reproductive health received less attention. Factors that contributed to the limitations of the learning process in schools include lack of resources, an unstructured curriculum, and inadequate training for teachers (Prawira and Aprilia, 2024).

Globally, a range of interventions has been implemented to address this issue of sexual violence against children. School and family-based programs have been developed with the aim of equipping children with fundamental self-protection skills (Lum et al., 2022). However, many of these programs are not designed inclusively and often fail to consider the cognitive and communication limitations of children with intellectual disabilities (Petersilia, 2001; Reiter et al., 2018). Furthermore, top-down approaches are often unsustainable and inadequately adapted to local socio-cultural contexts (Agmon et al., 2016).

Collaborative approaches involving multiple stakeholders are gaining traction, particularly through the Pentahelix model. This framework involves five strategic sectors: government, academia, communities/NGOs, the private sector, and the media. The interactions between multi-sector collaboration adopts a Ecological Systems Theory that can strengthen protection mechanisms. This theoretical lens underlines the importance of engaging actors across various ecological levels including families, schools, communities, institutions, and policies. Studies such as Kusumastuti et al. (2020) have shown that cross-sector collaboration can enhance the reach and effectiveness of community-based programs. In addition, by integrating the topic of reproductive health and sexuality into the subject, it can be implemented well, with a percentage of implementation of 60.79%. This implementation was carried out in seven schools in the provinces of West Java, East Java, and North Sumatra (Fatimatuzzahra et al., 2024).

However, there remains a gap in research specifically addressing how such approaches can be systematically applied in protecting children with intellectual disabilities from sexual violence (Mikton et al., 2014). Most available literature is still limited to conceptual discussions or small-scale case studies. No systematic literature review has comprehensively identified effective Pentahelix-based collaborative strategies for improving self-protection education for children with intellectual disabilities. Addressing this gap is the primary objective of the present study, which seeks to examine the positive impact of multi-actor involvement in strengthening children's protective capacities and to propose a conceptual framework tailored to the Indonesian context.

METHOD

The novelty of this study lies in its integrative focus on Pentahelix-based intervention strategies in the context of self-protection for children with intellectual disabilities, as well as its systematic approach in synthesizing evidence from Scopus-indexed literature across various countries. Unlike previous, more fragmented studies, this review aims to construct a comprehensive conceptual framework tailored to the Indonesian context. It is expected to offer both conceptual and practical contributions to policy formulation, educational program development, and capacity building among stakeholders at local and national levels.

The primary objective of this study is to identify Pentahelix-based collaborative strategies in self-protection education against sexual violence for children with intellectual disabilities, analyze the

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach as the primary method to identify Pentahelix-based collaborative strategies in self-protection education against sexual violence for children with intellectual disabilities. This method was chosen because it allows the researcher to systematically and transparently compile, evaluate, and synthesize evidence from previously published studies. The implementation of the review adheres to the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines, which provide a structured framework for reporting literature reviews.

The research design is qualitative and document-based, with an emphasis on the process of identifying, screening, assessing eligibility, and including relevant articles. This systematic process aims to provide a comprehensive overview of how collaborative strategies within the Pentahelix framework have been applied in the context of protecting children with intellectual disabilities across various countries, and to evaluate the extent to which cross-sector collaboration can enhance these children's ability to protect themselves from sexual violence.

The data sources used in this study consist of scientific articles indexed in the Scopus database. Scopus was selected as the primary source due to its reputation as one of the largest and most reliable academic databases in the world. The literature search was conducted purposively based on several inclusion criteria: articles must be Scopus-indexed, published between 2015 and 2024, written in English, available in full-text format, and relevant to the themes of child protection, intellectual disabilities, and multi-sector collaboration. The keywords used included: "intellectual disability," AND "child sexual abuse," AND "intervention," AND "Pentahelix," OR "multi-stakeholder," OR "collaboration," combined using Boolean operators.

The initial search yielded 187 articles. These articles were then screened according to the PRISMA stages. The first stage was identification, which involved compiling all articles from the initial search. The second stage was screening, which included removing duplicates and articles that did not meet the language or access criteria. This was followed by the eligibility assessment, where abstracts and full texts were reviewed for relevance to the research topic. Articles that met all inclusion criteria were then included in the final stage. The final result of this process was 25 articles deemed eligible for in-depth analysis.

To ensure objectivity in the selection and data analysis process, triangulation among researchers was conducted during the screening and data coding stages. The content validity of the analyzed literature was ensured by referring to the international standards of scientific publication quality, namely peer-reviewed articles indexed in Scopus.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis based on the approach by Braun and Clarke (2006). Each article was manually coded and categorized into relevant main themes, such as the forms of collaboration implemented, types of interventions applied, and the effectiveness of the Pentahelix approach in the context of child protection. If variations in collaborative strategies were identified within the Pentahelix elements (government, community, academia, private sector, and media), thematic modifications were made to strengthen the context of analysis and explore the interaction among actors.

Although this study did not involve direct participation of human subjects, it still adheres to the principles of academic integrity. All articles used as primary data are legally legitimate sources, publicly accessible, and have undergone scientific editorial review. Therefore, ethical clearance was not required for this study. The research process is complemented by the development of a PRISMA flow diagram, illustrating the article selection stages from

identification to inclusion, as a form of transparency and accountability in the literature review process.

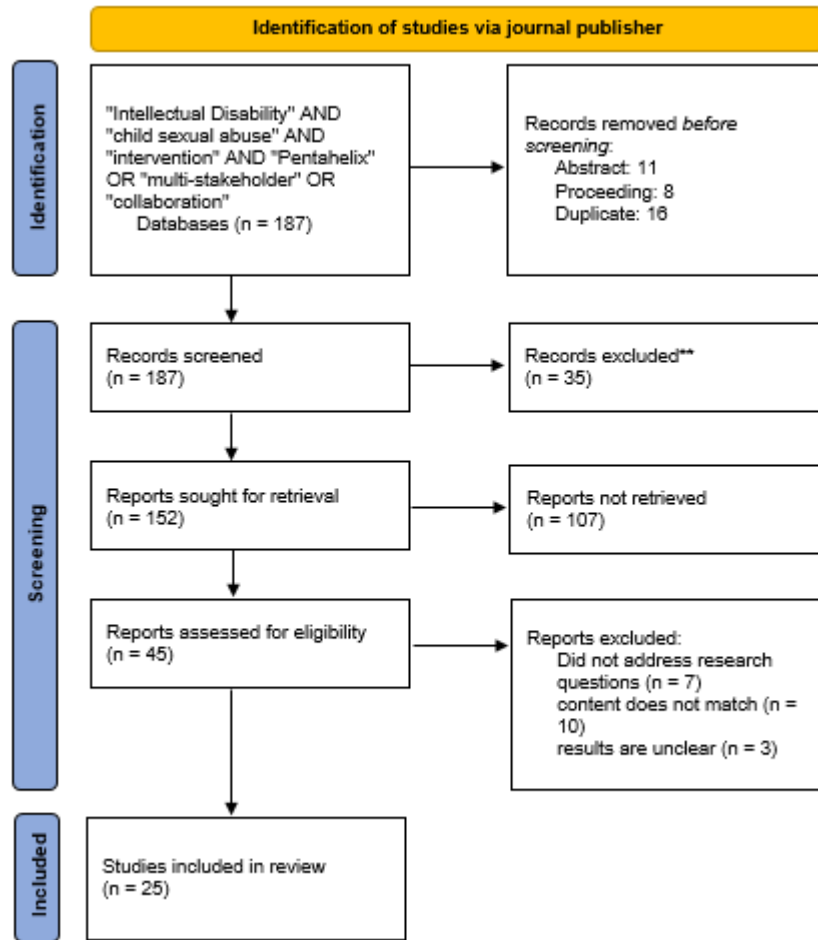


Figure 1. Prisma Flow Diagram of Article Selection Process

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding(s)

This systematic review analyzes 25 Scopus-indexed articles that explore practices, effectiveness, and collaborative models in the context of protecting children with intellectual disabilities, with a particular focus on the Pentahelix approach. The contributions of the five key elements of the Pentahelix government, academia, community/NGOs, the private sector, and media are examined in shaping an adaptive and sustainable child protection system.

The following table summarizes the 25 articles based on region of study, intervention focus, stakeholders involved, and key findings:

Table 1. summarizes of the 25 articles based on region of study, intervention focus, stakeholders involved, and key findings

No	Author & Year	Country	Intervention Focus	Pentahelix Actors
1	Wissink et al. (2015)	Netherlands	Narrative review on sexual abuse of children with intellectual disabilities	Government, Academics, Social Service Agencies
2	Mikton, Maguire, & Shakespeare (2014)	Multinational	Systematic review of effectiveness of interventions addressing violence against persons with disabilities	Government, Academics, NGOs, Health Professionals (implicitly)

No	Author & Year	Country	Intervention Focus	Pentahelix Actors
3	Jones et al. (2012)	Multinational	Meta-analysis on prevalence and risk of violence against children with disabilities	WHO, Academics, Public Health Researchers
4	Hughes et al. (2012)	Multinational	Meta-analysis of violence risk in adults with disabilities	WHO, Academics, Health Researchers (implicitly)
5	Hooker et al.	Australia	Review of sexual violence prevention interventions for women and girls	Government, Academics, NGOs, Communities, Schools
6	Rao et al. (2023)	USA (global focus)	Universal Design for Learning (UDL) for inclusive education and reducing learning barriers	Academics, Higher Ed Institutions, Government
7	Gruenthal-Rankin et al. (2023)	USA	Structural Vulnerability Profile in forensic anthropology	Academics, Forensic Practitioners, Communities
8	Bhattacharyya et al. (2008)	India	Strategic Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) using stakeholder mapping and value alignment	Government, Academics
9	Khemka et al. (2005)	USA	Decision-making curriculum for women with intellectual disabilities to refuse abuse	Academics, Therapy Professionals
10	Araten-Bergman & Bigby (2022)	Australia	Development and support of “circles of support” for people with intellectual disabilities	Government, Academics, Community, Disability Organizations
11	Franklin & Smeaton (2018)	United Kingdom	Protection from CSE for children with learning disabilities	Government, NGOs, Communities, Survivors
12	Barry et al. (2022)	Ireland	Use of evidence-based practices (EBP) by general education teachers for autistic students	Teachers, Academics, Government, Support Professionals
13	Pinot de Moira et al. (2021)	EU & Australia	Harmonization of child cohort variables for long-term FAIR-based research	Researchers, Universities, Hospitals, International Organizations
14	Ivri Verbin (2021)	Israel & Global	Corporate social responsibility and sustainability in the digital era	Corporations, Government, Academia, Civil Society, Media
15	Mygind et al. (2022)	Australia & Denmark	Relationship of vegetation cover with early childhood social-emotional development	Government, Academia, Community, Early Childhood Education Centers
16	Franklin, Brady, & Bradley	United Kingdom	Medicalization’s impact on prevention, detection, and recovery for abused disabled children	Government, Academia, NGOs, Disability Community
17	Agmon, Sa’ar & Araten-Bergman (2016)	Israel	Reintegrating personhood in adults with disabilities	Researchers, Social Service Providers
18	Yektaoğlu (2021)	Northern Cyprus	Self-protection training for girls with disabilities against sexual abuse	Special schools, Educators, Families
19	Kucuk, Platin & Erdem (2017)	Turkey	Sexual abuse protection education for mildly disabled children	Rehab Institutions, Academics, Families
20	Lum et al. (2023)	Australia	Implementation of healthy eating and physical activity in ECEC	Government, Health Services, Education Institutions

No	Author & Year	Country	Intervention Focus	Pentahelix Actors
21	Chen, Evans & Luu (2023)	Australia	Teacher attitudes toward Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	Government, Academics, Educators
22	Wilson et al. (2017)	Australia	Circles of Support program for social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities	Social Institutions, Families, Non-Profit Organizations
23	Casas et al. (2018)	Netherlands	Longitudinal study of child growth, lung function & asthma	Health Institutions, Universities, Research Organizations
24	Marshall (2014)	Northern Ireland (UK)	Child sexual exploitation and policy response	Government, NGOs, Local Communities
25	Kenny et al. (2008)	USA	Review of self-protection education programs for child sexual abuse	Schools, Parents, Academics, Child Organizations

Discussion(s)

An analysis of 25 Scopus-indexed articles reveals that the Pentahelix-based collaborative strategy significantly contributes to the development of adaptive self-protection education programs for children with intellectual disabilities. Based on thematic analysis, five major themes emerge, reflecting the collaborative dimensions of each actor within the Pentahelix approach:

1. Government as Strategic Policy Maker

Most articles emphasize the critical role of government in shaping policies that support the protection of children with disabilities. The government acts as the main facilitator by providing regulations, funding, and inter-agency coordination. Lum et al. (2019) show that the success of self-protection training in Australia heavily relies on policy support from local and national governments (Sullivan & Fisher, n.d.). These policies mandate that schools implement disability-friendly self-protection modules. Within the framework of Governance Network Theory (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016) the strategic role of the government extends beyond policymaking to becoming a connector of various actors in a child protection social network. In Indonesia, Putri et al. (2022) provide an example of local governments establishing village-based child protection teams involving village officials, special education teachers, health volunteers, and community leaders. Such models foster micro-level regulations tailored to local needs (Chawa et al., 2024).

2. Academics in Educational Intervention Design and Evaluation

Academics play a crucial role in designing curricula and training modules for self-protection, tailored to the characteristics of children with intellectual disabilities. Studies such as Briggs (2006) and Reiter et al. (2018) show that active learning approaches like role play, visual demonstrations, and the use of augmentative tools significantly enhance children's understanding of body boundaries and self-protection strategies (Blair & Blair, 2020). Academics also contribute to program evaluation. Briggs (2006) emphasizes the importance of evidence-based practice (EBP) to ensure that self-protection programs go beyond being informative and truly equip children with practical skills (Ellis, 2024). The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework (CAST, 2018) has been widely adopted to develop adaptive learning modules for children with cognitive and communication challenges (Rao, 2023).

3. Communities and NGOs as Grassroots Change Agents

Communities and NGOs act as both implementers and advocates on the ground. Studies by Araten-Bergman (2016) and Franklin & Smeaton (2017) highlight that training conducted by local cultural-aware organizations tends to be more accepted by the community (Gruenthal-Rankin et al., 2023). The Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) approach by WHO provides a solid foundation, indicating that social and educational interventions involving families and the child's environment are more effective in preventing violence. In Indonesia, Kusumastuti et al. (2020) leveraged the role of disability communities in Yogyakarta to develop culturally grounded training modules, translated into local languages and illustrated with simple visuals, making them more accessible to children with intellectual disabilities.

4. Private Sector as Partner in Innovation and Sustainability

While the role of the private sector in child disability protection remains underexplored, several studies highlight its potential, particularly through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) schemes. Businesses can contribute through innovation in sustainable business models that support the sustainable development goals (SDGs), including the protection of vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities (Azmat, 2023). Cross-sector collaboration between businesses, governments, and civil society organizations can strengthen efforts to prevent and address sexual violence, for example by providing training, access to services, and disability-friendly supporting technology (Stål, 2021). Businesses can contribute by developing disability-friendly products, services, or technologies, and supporting education and prevention programs for sexual violence through CSR initiatives (Ciulli, 2022). Active involvement of businesses in cross-sector innovation and collaboration can accelerate the achievement of a safe, inclusive, and sustainable environment for people with intellectual disabilities (Stål, 2021).

5. Media: Mainstreaming the Protection of Children with Disabilities

Media holds the power to shape public opinion and drive social change. Franklin & Smeaton (2017) describe how local media in the UK plays a vital role in amplifying issues of sexual violence against children with disabilities (Franklin et al., 2020). In Indonesia, the potential of local and social media remains underutilized. Nonetheless, initiatives such as educational podcasts, TikTok content by disability activists, and WhatsApp-based campaigns are emerging as alternative channels for delivering self-protection messages (Relations, 2020). Meanwhile, local governments such as the Bandung City DP3A conduct outreach on the prevention of sexual violence, provide legal and psychological assistance, and collaborate with the disability community to ensure that victims receive proper protection and recovery (Faris, 2024).

Based on the synthesis of the 25 reviewed articles, a conceptual framework of collaborative intervention using the Pentahelix model can be constructed. This model illustrates how the synergy of five actors government, academia, community/NGOs, private sector, and media interacts to establish effective and sustainable self-protection education programs for children with intellectual disabilities. The government acts as the main regulator, formulating policies and overseeing program implementation, as highlighted by Lum et al. (2019), who underscore the importance of local regulatory support in Australia's successful self-protection initiatives (Mygind et al., 2022). Academics contribute through research-based program design and field evaluation of program effectiveness. Studies by Briggs (2006) and Reiter et al. (2018) emphasize how curricula grounded in evidence-based

practice and UDL principles (CAST, 2018) enhance children's understanding of self-protection (Parker & Smith, 2022).

Local communities and NGOs play a key role in bridging children and families with protection programs, particularly in culturally sensitive areas. The WHO's Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) approach, supported by Araten-Bergman (2016), shows that involving communities in planning and implementation stages improves program acceptance (Araten-Bergman & Bigby, 2022). The private sector contributes through educational technology innovation and sustainable funding, as seen in South Korea and Norway, where corporate actors support the development of visual-based applications for children with disabilities (Pinot de Moira et al., 2021). Meanwhile, media serves a vital function in mainstreaming the issue of disability protection into public discourse, educating the public, and fostering positive narratives that uphold children's rights (Franklin & Smeaton, 2018).

However, the implementation of the Pentahelix model faces several challenges. One major challenge is the lack of adequate training for teachers and professionals. McMahon et al. (2020) reveal that many special education teachers have not received sufficient training in teaching self-protection, particularly regarding sexuality education for children with disabilities (Barry et al., 2022). Existing curricula tend to be generic, lack contextual relevance, and fail to accommodate children's cognitive differences (Barry et al., 2022).

Social stigma and cultural norms in many communities also pose significant barriers. As Lum et al. (2019) note, sexuality remains a taboo topic, especially in the context of children with intellectual disabilities, often resulting in resistance to self-protection education programs. Another pressing issue is the scarcity of visual and interactive modules. Many current programs are text-heavy, whereas children with intellectual disabilities require learning approaches based on images, simulations, and interactive applications (Naeemy & Yoneda, 2024). Sustainability also remains a concern, as many self-protection initiatives rely on short-term funding and are not yet integrated into the national education system (Maak et al., 2021).

There is an urgent need to establish a national regulation mandating the implementation of self-protection education programs for children with disabilities across all special and inclusive schools in Indonesia. Such curricula must be grounded in Universal Design for Learning (Chen et al., 2023), accommodating diverse learning styles and accessibility needs of children with intellectual impairments.

Program implementation must involve all sectors collaboratively and sustainably, moving beyond reliance on short-term project funding. Local communities should be engaged from the planning phase to ensure that programs are contextualized according to cultural values, thereby enhancing program acceptance and effectiveness. The use of mass and digital media with disability-friendly content should be an integral part of social communication strategies to expand educational outreach and reduce social stigma (Asiva Noor Rachmayani, 2015).

The urgency to protect children with intellectual disabilities is further reinforced by the Vulnerability Framework (Hollomotz, 2006), which explains that these children face double vulnerability both physically and socially. Their inability to comprehend and communicate experiences makes community-based protection systems vital. The effectiveness of the Pentahelix approach in building a sustainable protection system is also supported by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), which advocates for simultaneous interventions across multiple layers of a child's social environment (Härkönen, 2007).

Successful implementation of this model, as demonstrated in the Safe from the Start program in Australia proves that multi-actor collaboration in Pentahelix can foster a safe and inclusive learning ecosystem for children with disabilities (Lum et al., 2023). However, implementation gaps remain significant, especially in developing countries like Indonesia, India, and several African nations, where policies are often not matched by strong execution capacities (Bhattacharyya et al., 2008). Innovations in self-protection education such as story based mobile apps point to promising directions in improving learning effectiveness (Pinot de Moira et al., 2021) Ultimately, key challenges such as inadequate teacher training, cultural resistance, lack of adaptive educational modules, and dependency on short-term projects must be addressed through multisectoral collaboration grounded in local needs and empirical evidence.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the collaborative strategy based on the Pentahelix model as an effective framework that has proven effective in enhancing self-protection skills among children with intellectual disabilities against sexual violence. The integration of government, academics, communities, businesses, and media enables the formation of an intervention system that is sustainable, adaptive, and responsive to the local needs of children. This approach successfully addresses the sectoral limitations that have long hindered the protection of children with disabilities.

Overall, through the lens of ecological systems theory, it becomes clear that this endeavor demands a holistic and integrated approach. From microsystems, such as families and schools, which offer direct education and support, to mesosystems, such as parent-teacher partnerships. The exosystem, which includes components such as company policies or access to community facilities, and the macrosystem, which shapes cultural norms and legal systems, play a critical role in creating a safe environment.

Nevertheless, this collaborative strategy still faces several challenges, such as the lack of teacher training, cultural resistance to discussing issues of sexuality, limited availability of adaptive teaching materials, and the minimal integration of such programs into the national education system. Therefore, national policy reform, the strengthening of innovation through educational technology, active community involvement, and the use of inclusive media are strategic actions that must be implemented to realize a child protection system that is inclusive and grounded in children's rights.

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