



Impacts of dialogic scientific gatherings on mothers' participation in conflict prevention and school coexistence

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ABSTRACT

The scientific literature has identified Dialogic Scientific Gatherings (DSG) as an educational action that brings scientific evidence that contributes to the advancement of societal challenges for all people regardless of age, gender, culture or ability. However, the impact of family participation in DSG on the improvement of coexistence in schools has not yet been analyzed. In order to address this gap and within the framework for advancing of SDG 4 “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education” and the SDG 5, “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls,” a qualitative case study has been developed with nine participants, including life stories and focus groups with non-academic mothers, and in-depth interviews with a teacher, the Headmistress and head of studies, following the communicative methodology, to analyze the impact of the DSG on the involvement of non-academic mothers engaged in the development of the Dialogic Model of Prevention and Resolution of Conflicts (DMPRC) in an urban elementary school. Results show that mothers who participated in the DSG are among the most involved in the DMPRC implementation process, as well as in the spaces of dialogue for the consensus of the rule of coexistence, providing arguments, which contributed to the whole community coming together to improve coexistence in the school from their engagement with the discussion of scientific evidence of social impact in DSG.

1. Introduction

Family involvement in education has long been recognized as a key factor for improving school coexistence and student achievement (Kim, 2018; Shaeffer, 2002). In this study, the term school coexistence is used to translate the Spanish concept *convivencia escolar*. However, it is important to note that *convivencia* does not have a direct equivalent in English. In Spanish, the *Real Academia Española* defines *convivir* as “vivir en compañía de otro u otros” [to live in the company of another or others] and also as “coexistir en armonía” [to coexist in harmony] (*Real Academia Española*, 2021). Thus, the concept of *convivencia* involves not only living together but doing so harmoniously, particularly among diverse people, cultures, or languages. By contrast, English terms often used as translations do not necessarily include this normative dimension. For instance, the Oxford English Dictionary defines coexistence as “existence together or at the same time” (Oxford University Press, 2022)

which does not imply harmonious relationships. Similarly, expressions such as living together simply refer to sharing space or life circumstances without necessarily implying positive or egalitarian interaction. Therefore, in the context of this study, school coexistence refers to a form of social interaction oriented toward harmonious, egalitarian, and non-violent relationships within diverse educational communities, as conceptualised in the scientific literature (Campdepadrós-Cullell & De Botton, 2021).

Research shows that family involvement can take various forms, such as receiving information from the school or being consulted about specific issues (Fan & Chen, 2001). However, only certain types of family participation have demonstrated an impact on learning and school coexistence. Evidence indicates that active, dialogic participation, particularly in contexts where families have limited formal Education, enhances academic success and supports social cohesion (Jacobs, 2023; Rodríguez-Oramas et al., 2022; Shehan, 2023). Among these

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effective forms of engagement, dialogic approaches stand out for fostering both academic development and democratic school environments (Motherway, 2022; Patel, 2023).

In today's dialogic society, citizens increasingly demand their right to participate in and benefit from scientific development (Flecha, 2022), as stated in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948). Participation grounded in egalitarian dialogue involves including the voices of diverse participants through interactions in which everyone engages on equal terms. Co-creation builds on this approach by establishing collaborative processes between scientists and citizens that rely on evidence and reasoned argument, moving beyond both top-down and bottom-up models. Including all people, especially those traditionally excluded, in the creation of scientific knowledge is essential for advancing equality and improving society. The European Commission (2018) requires funded projects to demonstrate co-creation with citizens throughout the scientific process.

This principle underpins the present study, which addresses two research questions: (1) What impact do Dialogic Scientific Gatherings (DSG) have on the involvement of participating mothers in developing the Dialogic Model of Prevention and Resolution of Conflicts (DMPRC)? (2) What impact does the DMPRC have on improving coexistence in the school?

DSG have been identified as an educational action that enables participants, regardless of age, gender, culture, or educational level, to discuss scientific content and have demonstrated positive effects on academic outcomes and school coexistence (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2023). Within the ALLINTERACT project, funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 program, one case study implemented DSG with families, mostly mothers without university degrees, and teachers, focusing on violence prevention, a topic chosen by participants (Flecha & ALLINTERACT Consortium, 2020). Over two academic years, participants engaged in ten DSG sessions, discussing seven scientific papers on violence and gender violence prevention. Previous findings reported increased awareness of the social impact of scientific research and greater community involvement (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2023).

Building on this experience, the school decided to implement the DMPRC, one of the educational actions most discussed in DSG. The present case study, developed within the ALL WOMEN research project, examines the impact of DSG on mothers' involvement in DMPRC and its contribution to improving school coexistence. This study aligns with SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality) by promoting inclusive participation and equitable access to scientific knowledge.

2. Method

The impact of the DSG on the participating mothers who have been involved in the development of the DMPRC, as well as the impact that this model has had on the school coexistence, has been examined through a communicative qualitative case study (Gómez et al., 2011). Before presenting the data collection techniques that make up the case study, the contextualization of this study is presented below.

2.1. The case study context and the intervention

This case study is part of the research project *ALL WOMEN. The empowerment of all women through adult education for sustainable development* (2021–2024), funded by the Spanish Research Agency under the program for research addressing societal challenges. The project analyzes formal and non-formal adult education actions that empower non-academic women and provides scientific evidence of their social impact. In this study, empowerment is understood within the United Nations (2015) framework of SDG 5, which seeks to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.” In this context, empowerment refers to the strengthening of women's agency, participation, and leadership in educational settings, closely aligned with SDG 5 targets that are most relevant to the school environment. Specifically, this includes Target

5.2, which calls to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, and Target 5.5, which highlights women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership in decision-making. In the case studied, empowerment is reflected in mothers' increased ability to participate in dialogic decision-making spaces, to contribute to the prevention of school-based violence and conflicts, and to assume active leadership roles in shaping coexistence norms through their involvement in DSG and DMPRC.

The study was conducted in a public pre-school and primary school with 450 students, located in a low socio-economic neighborhood in the metropolitan area of Barcelona. The school belongs to the Learning Communities network, which implements Successful Educational Actions (SEAs) based on scientific evidence of social impact to improve both academic learning and social cohesion (Flecha & INCLUD-ED Consortium, 2015). After introducing DSG with families on violence prevention during the 2020–2021 and 2021–2022 academic years, the school decided to implement another SEA in 2022–2023: the DMPRC.

The DMPRC engages the entire community in preventing and resolving conflicts through consensus on coexistence rules, following principles of deliberative democracy (Elster, 1998). This process involves several steps to ensure inclusive dialogue and participation. For a rule to be effective, it must be agreed upon by all, related to key issues in children's lives, have broad social support, and eliminate non-compliance, turning its achievement into a shared example (Flecha & INCLUD-ED Consortium, 2015). The model also promotes communicative acts, not only what is said, but how it is said and its coherence with actions, across all school interactions. Acts that reject violence and publicly support victims are socially valued (Villarejo-Carballido et al., 2019). Evidence shows that DMPRC reduces violence through bystander intervention, peer support networks, and education on the value of true friendship from early childhood (Banyard, 2008).

On 12 December 2022, an assembly gathered families, teachers, and staff to present DMPRC and discuss coexistence improvements. More than 50 people attended, including over 20 mothers previously involved in DSG, who played a key role in mobilizing new families. Subsequent classroom debates invited families to share ideas on “how I like to be treated” and the school they envision. Mothers who participated in DSG contributed arguments based on scientific evidence, linking them to children's daily experiences. A coexistence commission compiled these contributions into a proposed rule.

On 8 June 2023, a final assembly brought together over 90 families, teachers, and students to reach consensus on the rule: *The community of School C is sincere. We listen and help, are inclusive and grateful, and respect each other. We are brave because we reject and take a stand against any kind of violence.*

This process led to significant transformations, including the definition of the coexistence rule as described, as well as the implementation of other actions within the DMPRC framework. These actions aim to remove the social appeal of aggression and foster solidarity by promoting a culture where bravery means actively defending victims and rejecting violence. Rather than remaining passive bystanders, community members are encouraged to become upstanders, taking a clear position against any form of aggression and supporting those affected.

2.2. Data collection

This qualitative study, grounded in a communicative methodology, employed four data collection techniques, in-depth interviews, communicative daily life stories, a communicative focus group, and communicative observation, to analyze the impact of DSG on participating mothers and the development of the DMPRC. All techniques promoted egalitarian dialogue, where researchers and participants co-created knowledge by bringing everyday experiences into conversation with scientific evidence. Interpretive validity was based on the strength of arguments and intersubjective consensus rather than power positions (Flecha & Soler, 2014).

In-depth interviews: Three interviews were conducted with educational professionals (the Headmistress, the head of studies, and a teacher) in a private meeting room within the school during the second semester of the 2022–2023 academic year, after the DMPRC had been implemented. Rather than relying on closed questions, these interviews followed a dialogic structure that integrated prior scientific evidence on DSG and DMPRC with participants' perspectives. Topics included: (1) perceptions of DSG's impact on mothers' involvement in school life; (2) the process of implementing the DMPRC, including the consensual definition of the coexistence rule; and (3) observed changes in school coexistence and family–school relationships.

Communicative daily life stories: Three communicative life stories were collected from mothers who had participated in both DSG and DMPRC. These sessions, held in the same private meeting room after the final assembly in June 2023, transformed the narration of everyday experiences into collaborative reflection aimed at interpreting significant events related to their participation. Each story explored previous experiences of school participation, motivations for joining DSG, learning on violence prevention, and perceived transformations in relationships with children and the school community.

Communicative focus group: A communicative focus group with other three mothers was organized in the room used by the families' association, also after the June 2023 assembly, providing a space for collective reflection on their experiences. The discussion addressed themes such as the impact of DSG on confidence to participate in decision-making spaces, experiences in assemblies for defining coexistence rule, and perceived changes in school coexistence and trust between families and teachers.

Communicative observation: Observations were conducted in the school library during DSG sessions held across three academic years (2020–2021, 2021–2022, 2022–2023) and during the family assembly on 12 December 2022 where the DMPRC was presented and discussed. Informal conversations with participants after the observed sessions clarified interpretations and ensured intersubjective consensus on the meaning of observed interactions.

Participants in interviews, life stories, and the focus group were selected for their active involvement in DSG and DMPRC, while prioritizing cultural diversity among families. Selection criteria, defined by the ALL WOMEN project, were: (1) women from school families without higher education degrees, and (2) educational professionals from the school. All participants provided written informed consent, voluntarily chose to participate, and were anonymized using pseudonyms (see Table 1). Although some men participated in DSG and DMPRC, women were by far the majority, aligning with the project's focus. Educational staff selected were also women and the most engaged in these initiatives.

No further data collection was carried out, as saturation was reached,

Table 1
Profiles of participants in data collection.

Pseudonym	Data collection	Profile	Age	Birth country	ISCED
Anisa	Focus Group	Mother	35–39	Morocco	L2
Lucía	Focus Group	Mother	40–44	Spain	L1
Fatima	Focus Group	Mother	35–39	Morocco	L2
Manuela	Life-Story	Mother	45–49	Spain	L1
Carmen	Life-Story	Mother	35–39	Spain	L4
Dina	Life-Story	Mother	40–44	Morocco	L1
Julia	In-depth interview	Headmistress	45–49	Spain	L5
Esther	In-depth interview	Head of studies	60–64	Spain	L5
Aurora	In-depth interview	Teacher	45–49	Spain	L5

Note. ISCED = International Standard Classification of Education (1997): L1 = Primary Education 1–6; L2: Lower secondary education; L3 = Upper Secondary Education 1–2; L4 = Post-secondary non-tertiary education; L5 = First stage of tertiary education 1–3/4; L6 = Second stage of tertiary education 1/2.

understood as the point at which no new themes relevant to the research questions emerged. Rather than aiming for representativeness, the study sought an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences within their specific social and educational context.

2.3. Data analysis

All data collection procedures were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The recordings and anonymized transcripts were securely stored in an encrypted cloud repository of the University of [Anonymised], with access restricted to the research team. A thematic analysis was conducted, combining deductive reasoning, guided by the research questions and existing literature, with inductive insights emerging from the data. Themes were identified through discussion and consensus among the research team (Table 2).

The analysis followed these steps:

- (1) Full transcripts were reviewed by the research team.
- (2) Excerpts directly addressing the two guiding research questions were independently selected:
 - o RQ1: What impact did the DSG have on the involvement of participating mothers in the development of the DMPRC?
 - o RQ2: What impact has the DMPRC had on improving coexistence within the school?
- (3) Analytical categories were established based on observed impacts.
 - o Category 1: Impact of DSG on mothers' involvement in DMPRC (three subcategories).
 - o Category 2: Impact of DMPRC on improving coexistence (two subcategories).
- (4) Selected excerpts were systematically classified under these categories.
- (5) Validation: The preliminary analysis was sent back to participants for dialogic validation. They reviewed the interpretations and confirmed their accuracy. No changes were requested, which reinforced the communicative orientation of the study and ensured that participants' voices were faithfully represented.

2.4. Ethics statement

The study complied with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki and was fully reviewed and approved by the State Research Agency of

Table 2
Analytical categories and subcategories.

Category	Subcategory	Description
1. Impact of DSG on mothers' involvement in DMPRC	1.1 Role of mothers participating in DSG in encouraging other families to engage in DMPRC	Mothers acted as key agents in mobilizing other families to participate in assemblies and decision-making spaces.
	1.2 Incorporation of scientific evidence by mothers in DSG debates to reach consensus on coexistence rules	Mothers used arguments based on scientific evidence discussed in DSG to influence deliberations on the coexistence rule.
	1.3 Acquisition of new skills that contribute to lifelong preventive socialization against violence	Participation fostered confidence, empathy, and strategies for non-violent conflict resolution at school and home.
2. Impact of DMPRC on improving coexistence	2.1 Enhancement of coexistence among students	Observed reduction in conflicts and adoption of upstander behaviors through dialogic practices.
	2.2 Strengthening of relationships between families and teachers, fostering greater mutual trust	Increased collaboration and trust between families and school staff, improving communication and shared responsibility.

the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities (approval number PID2020-113137RA-I00, June 20, 2021). All participants provided written informed consent, confirming voluntary participation, the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences, and agreement to the dissemination and publication of findings. To ensure full understanding, participants were also informed orally and given the opportunity to ask a member of the research team any questions they had. After completing the project and submitting all results, the State Research Agency issued a formal evaluation on January 27, 2025, highlighting the achievement of 100% of the objectives, proper execution of scientific activities, and significant social impacts among women in vulnerable situations, such as increased self-confidence, improved well-being, and strengthened community leadership. The report also confirmed that ethical and data management procedures were appropriate, with data stored in a restricted-access repository for the research team and anonymized in compliance with current regulations.

3. Results

3.1. Impact of DSG on the involvement of the participating mothers in the development of the DMPRC in the school

3.1.1. Involvement of mothers who participate in the DSG in encouraging the participation of other families in the DMPRC implementation process

One of the initial steps in the development of the DMPRC is to establish dialogue spaces in all classes with the children to decide on the school's rule of coexistence, to which families are also invited. Participants in this study reported that mothers participating in the DSG were not only highly active in these dialogues but also encouraged other families to participate. Family participation in the classroom discussions regarding the rule of coexistence was very high; in some groups, almost all families were present. This was explained by Esther, the Head of Studies at the school:

When the parents had to participate in the group meetings, of course, the mothers who came to the gatherings were the ones who brought more parents (who had not participated before, not even in the DSG). We had some class meetings where there were 23 families (there are 25 students per classroom) to talk about the rule of coexistence, that is to say, the way of participating has been exponential.

(Esther, Head of studies)

Fatima, one of the Moroccan mothers participating in the Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLGs), has become a role model for other Moroccan mothers who had not yet taken part. These mothers often turn to her and the other participants whenever they have questions or concerns. Through their support, Fatima and the group have given them the confidence to engage both in the DLGs and in the classroom discussions on the decision regarding the coexistence rule.

Many mums come to me to ask me for help, but I think that between them all. As they ask me, they ask other colleagues, but it's true that they come and ask you and say, is this so that you can help them. There are things that maybe they don't understand or whatever, so they do come.

(Fatima, mother)

Furthermore, the Headmistress of the school stated that the Moroccan mothers, who had previously stayed away from the school and had not participated in school meetings, took part in the DSG and in the discussions concerning the decision on the rule of coexistence: These mothers came, it's just that, at another time, at the beginning of everything when they (Moroccan mothers) were left out, maybe they would not have come, but they came, they came to participate in the drafting of the rule of coexistence rule, because they are concerned about coexistence, they are concerned about their children, just like any other family.

(Julia, Headmistress)

In the in-depth interview, Esther, the Head of Studies, described the process from the consolidation of the DSG to the development of the DMPRC. She reported that mothers who had been involved in the DSG from the outset, together with participating teachers, actively encouraged other families to attend classroom dialogue sessions and the assemblies convened to decide on the rule of coexistence:

If someone had told me two years ago that we would have this level of participation, I wouldn't have believed it. I always thought that parents were an opportunity, but every day they truly teach me a lesson about the value of that opportunity.

(Esther, Head of Studies)

These findings show that the participation of mothers in the DSG played a key role in fostering broader family involvement in the development of the DMPRC. Mothers who were active in the DSGs not only engaged in classroom dialogues but also encouraged other families to join, leading to exceptionally high levels of participation in discussions on the coexistence rule. In some classes, 23 out of 25 families attended these meetings, an unprecedented level of involvement considering that most of them had not previously participated in school activities. The testimonies from school staff and mothers are clear examples of this dynamic, illustrating how trust and collaboration were strengthened, particularly among Moroccan mothers who had previously remained distant from school life. Their involvement demonstrates the transformative impact of dialogic spaces in promoting inclusive participation and shared responsibility in decision-making within the school community.

3.1.2. Mothers involved in DSG incorporate scientific evidence in the dialogues to reach consensus on the rule of coexistence of the school Rule

In the debates regarding the rule of coexistence, family members who participated in the DSG, predominantly mothers, were the most active contributors. The Head of Studies, explained that all opinions were considered and validated based on the strength of the underlying arguments rather than the position of the person expressing them. This procedure was applied both within the DSG and in classroom discussions with families and children during the decision-making process on the rule of coexistence:

In a DSG if it is truly dialogical, the opinion you give when it is based on arguments is accepted. You lose the fear of giving your opinion, of saying your point of view. I have noticed this (in the mothers). It was always the mothers (those who participated in the DSG) who spoke first or raised their hand when we asked a question in class. They would immediately make their comment. (The DSG) empowers them and makes them feel confident.

(Esther, Head of Studies)

According to the Head of Studies, the fact that these mothers had read and discussed scientific articles on violence prevention in the DSG, enabled them to bring well-assimilated arguments into the subsequent debates regarding the decision on the school's rule of coexistence. She emphasises that the mothers participating in the DSG contributed not merely opinions, but evidence-based contributions. This facilitated mutual learning, allowing all participants to co-create knowledge about the content and purpose of the rule of coexistence:

As a result of the fact that they have met, that they have read and that we have talked calmly about these issues, but with a scientific basis, not just giving an opinion for the sake of giving an opinion, but with a scientific basis. This contributes much more, it makes us learn much more from each other and therefore, to reach this co-creation. That is to say, we have all learned, that is to say, the things we have learned from these articles we have assimilated.

(Esther, Head of Studies)

The Head of Studies highlighted that mothers' participation in the dialogue spaces regarding the decision on the rule of coexistence facilitated children's disclosure of school coexistence situations that they had previously shared with their mothers but not with teachers. She indicated that children do not always feel confident or free to report all experiences at school, and that typically only a small portion of children's experiences is communicated in school. In this case, however, the students shared additional information at home with their mothers:

When they (families with children at classroom) discussed the rule of coexistence, I was truly surprised. I understood many things that I hadn't before because they have a perspective, and their children share certain things with them. I realized, above all, that the children didn't have the freedom to tell us everything they sometimes go through and don't express. They only tell us the tip of the iceberg, while they share much more at home

(Esther, Head of the Studies)

In the dialogues held in children's classes with mothers' participation, some mothers shared insights they had read and discussed in the DSG regarding strategies for violence prevention, which they later reinforced through conversations at home with their children. These home dialogues enabled children to disclose a greater number of situations related to school coexistence. Based on this knowledge, it was the mothers who proposed introducing a weekly assembly in each class—a practice they had learned from the articles discussed in the DSG as an effective measure for preventing and resolving conflicts. This proposal was adopted by the school, and since then, every class has held a weekly assembly:

When reading (scientific articles on violence prevention in DSG), they then began to explain and talk about things they had discussed at home. It was they who suggested that these topics should also be discussed in a gathering with children. I'm not sure if you (referring to the researcher who conducted the interview and participates in the DSG) were present when they said that we should talk about these issues more, as we discussed them only briefly in class. I responded, "Oh yes, of course" As a result of this discussion in the families' scientific gatherings, a weekly assembly was established.

(Esther, Head of Studies)

The confidence gained by families, particularly those who had not previously participated in the DSG, facilitated their engagement in the preceding dialogues and contributed to their participation in the final assembly. Julia, the Headmistress, noted that mothers who had not previously attended school meetings felt more secure due to their involvement throughout the process leading to the decision on the rule of coexistence, as they were already familiar with the arguments underpinning the proposals:

So, when they came that day, they already knew what we were talking about, because they were part of the whole process. We didn't just invite them to the final party, but they came throughout the whole process, and I think that's why so many of them came, because they already knew, they knew, they had participated throughout the whole process.

(Julia, Headmistress)

On the day of the final assembly, the rules proposed by each class were consolidated into a single rule. Common contributions were identified. The Head of Studies highlighted one of these contributions: the importance of positioning oneself as an upstander in support of the victim and recognizing those who do so as brave. She explained that repeated elements across the different proposals were incorporated into the final rule through consensus, which was reached remarkably quickly, reflecting the high level of engagement and shared understanding developed throughout the process. As she described:

We put all the proposals of the rule together and saw which words were repeated in all of them. We identified what we were trying to achieve: respect and standing by the victim. Well, there were a series of things that were repeated in all the proposed rules and so we all agreed on a rule that included all of this. Some parents raised their hands and said, 'I'd like to remember that we have to put "brave people"', "oops, it's true, we forgot!", I mean, everyone was very attentive and in 10 min it was done; we took a family photo, and we had the agreed rule.

(Esther, Head of Studies)

The results show that mothers who participated in the DSG played a decisive role in the process of agreeing on the school's rule of coexistence. Their prior reading and discussion of scientific evidence on violence prevention empowered them to contribute arguments rather than mere opinions, fostering dialogic interactions grounded in knowledge. This dynamic strengthened mutual learning and co-creation among all participants and encouraged children to share experiences of school coexistence that they had previously kept silent. Furthermore, the mothers' initiative to propose weekly assemblies—based on practices identified in the scientific articles—was adopted by the school, demonstrating the influence of evidence-based contributions throughout the process. The confidence gained by families, particularly those who had not previously engaged in school activities, facilitated their active involvement in the final assembly, where consensus was reached swiftly and inclusively. The final rule incorporated repeated elements across proposals, and supporting and standing by the victim was explicitly recognized as a brave attitude.

3.1.3. Developing new skills for a life-long preventive socialization of violence

All mothers participating in this study reported that involvement in the DSG and the dialogue spaces for reaching consensus on the rule of coexistence enabled them to act with their children in accordance with the guidelines agreed upon at school. This process not only aligned the messages children receive from school and home, but also coordinated the actions implemented in both contexts. In their own words, the mothers emphasized that families and teachers now act 'collectively' in accordance with the agreements reached by all parties:

I believe this has been done to ensure that everyone is aligned so that at home we can work with the children on what has been collectively agreed upon. If it were only agreed upon at the school, it wouldn't reach the families. Therefore, our participation in the rules is very important, as it allows us to understand how we need to work at home and then at school, with everyone acting unison.

(Lucia, participating mother)

Certainly, it's important for everyone to work on the same line, because if what is worked on at home is not aligned with what is addressed here, it's as if...

(Fatima, participating mother)

Manuela, a participating mother in this study, emphasises the learning gained through the process, including the development of greater empathy toward others, collaboration and the understanding that learning is continuous throughout life to achieve new goals. She notes that, although they have now established the agreed rule of coexistence, this achievement represents an ongoing learning process guided by the objectives set collectively:

We've learned so much. We've learned to have more empathy among ourselves, to understand that it's possible, no matter if you're 30, 40, 50, 60, 80, or 90 years old. Because learning is always ongoing. We've all created a big family. We don't just stick with this first option (the agreed rule), but we always say, we can reach this goal and then, after this goal, achieve another one.

(Manuela, participating mother)

Anisa, another participating Moroccan mother, explains that her involvement in the DSG and the DMPRC has supported her in her relationship with her children, providing learning, empowerment, and the conviction that learning is possible. She further emphasises that all participants, children, families, and teachers, have benefited from this dialogic process, contributing to the formation of a strong, supportive community that enhances neighborhood cohesion:

Personally, for me, as a mother, it has taught me to be a better mother, because when you have a child, they don't come with an instruction manual. It has filled me with wisdom, empowered me, and made me believe that learning is possible. It's not only the children who learn by coming to school, but also the families, teachers, and educators themselves. Together, we form a strong, supportive community, and we have built more unity in the neighborhood.

(Anisa, participating mother)

Lucia, a mother participating in the DSG, explains that her involvement in the implementation of the DMPRC has been not only a valuable personal experience but also an opportunity to support her children by gaining a broader range of perspectives on addressing everyday learning situations, understood in a comprehensive sense beyond coexistence alone:

And for me, it has been a very nice experience because it has helped me to learn more and to be a better person as well because it opens you up... first to help your children because you see other ways of how to deal with learning with them on a day-to-day basis.

(Lucia, participating mother)

The testimonies reveal that mothers perceived their participation in the DSG and in the decision-making process on the rule of coexistence as an opportunity for meaningful learning and empowerment. They highlighted the importance of acting collectively with teachers to ensure coherence between home and school, which they considered essential for supporting their children effectively. Mothers described gaining new skills such as empathy, collaboration, and the conviction that learning is lifelong, regardless of age. They also emphasized personal growth, feeling better prepared for parenting and more confident in addressing everyday educational situations. Furthermore, they valued the creation of a strong, supportive community that benefits children, families, and educators alike, contributing to greater unity in the neighborhood. These perceptions underscore that the process was not limited to agreeing on a rule but represented an ongoing, shared learning experience that strengthened both individual and collective capacities.

3.2. Impact of the DMPRC on improving coexistence in the school and beyond

3.2.1. Improving coexistence among students

The contributions from life stories, focus groups with mothers, and in-depth interviews with teachers indicate a clear improvement in children's coexistence. Mothers involved in the study, including Anisa, explained in the classroom debates with children and other families the concept of "brave". This concept, which they had read and discussed in scientific articles during the DSG, is based on educational actions framed within the dialogic model that promote standing by the victim and rejecting violent behavior. It emphasises positioning oneself on the side of the victim and recognizing such actions as courageous attitudes that contribute to improving coexistence. According to Anisa, children have adopted non-violent conflict resolution strategies, thereby positioning themselves to prevent violent attitudes from succeeding. As she expressed:

Well (coexistence has improved), as well as learning. I think that coexistence has created another way of thinking. I remember, and I'm going to put it this way, a bit brusquely, but it's a reality. I

remember that people used to say, 'if they hit you, hit them back, don't let them hit you'. And now, ha cambiado since we read the articles en las tertulias sobre lo que significa ser valiente sin usar la violencia, the assemblies.

(Anisa, participating mother)

Manuela also highlighted the improvement in coexistence resulting from dialogues with children and increased knowledge of violence prevention. She attributes this learning to her involvement in the DSG and in the process of drafting the rule of coexistence within the framework of the DMPRC, which emphasises dialogue as a means of achieving common well-being:

Yes, yes, I have seen an improvement because we have understood that violence is not only physical aggression, but also verbal aggression, and we have learned that you don't have to shout, that you have to talk, that you have to have a conversation, that you don't have to get into aggressive terms in order to understand each other, right? And I think that this has been thanks to the whole process that has taken place with these gatherings, with the rule. The rule has been fundamental to being able to learn and to see that things cannot be achieved through violence, but through communication and the wellbeing of all.

(Manuela, participating mother)

Another participating mother, Lucia, emphasises that a key factor in the improvement of children's coexistence is the response now provided by adults. She explained that, previously, when a child reported a conflict, adults might have downplayed its significance. Currently, adults, both teachers and family members, consistently listen and take action, which has facilitated children in reporting situations of violence that previously went unaddressed:

In the old days, people used to say, 'Oh, it's children's stuff' and now no, it's not children's stuff because maybe it's hurting the child, and you think it's not very important.

(Lucia, participating mother)

Dina, a Moroccan mother who learned Spanish in the school's classes for mothers, has participated in the DSG and the assemblies for decision-making on the rule of coexistence. She asserts that coexistence has improved since mothers began participating in the DSG the previous year and throughout the past year, during which the dialogue spaces and assemblies have been held. She considers this process to have been highly effective:

Last year, yes, and the year before as well. And indeed, the improvements made for the school and the children have been significant. The rule of coexistence is now working very effectively.

(Dina, participating mother)

The interviewed teacher also describes a transformation in student interactions, emphasising positive behavior and mutual support both in the classroom and in the schoolyard. The teacher notes that, since students began engaging in dialogue across various areas of the school within the DMPRC, including the playground, the incidence of conflicts has decreased and even disappeared:

Even in the break time, conflicts are no longer as frequent since I started. I don't see them anymore. We are also more inclined to communicate. I spend my time in the break time talking with the children.

(Aurora, teacher)

The teacher highlights that another factor contributing to the improvement in children's behavior is their perception of the connection between mothers and teachers. This is due not only to the coordination and alignment of messages provided to children at home and at school since mothers and teachers began participating in the DSG, but also to the close and collaborative relationship demonstrated by the teachers

with the mothers:

They (mothers) are aware of what we want, understand how we are working on it, and at that moment, I saw clearly that we are all aligned. Absolutely, it's truly astonishing. I also believe they (children) see the connection you have with the mothers. They observe that you are there, opening the door and greeting them with, "Good morning, how was your weekend?"

(Aurora, teacher)

The findings indicate that the DMPCRC has had a significant impact on improving coexistence among students. Mothers emphasized that their participation in the DSG and in the decision-making process on the rule of coexistence enabled them to promote values of dialogue and non-violence, which children have incorporated into their daily interactions. The concept of bravery, learned through scientific articles discussed in the DSG, was central to these changes, as it encouraged positioning oneself on the side of the victim and rejecting violent behavior. Testimonies reveal that children now adopt non-violent strategies to resolve conflicts, and families and teachers act collectively to ensure coherence between home and school. Mothers reported greater awareness of different forms of violence, highlighting dialogue as the path to achieving well-being for all. Teachers also observed a reduction in conflicts, even during break times, and noted that students perceive the strong connection between families and educators, reinforcing trust and collaboration.

3.2.2. Improving the relationship between families and teachers toward confidence

Regarding the improvement in school coexistence, the Headmistress also highlighted enhanced relationships between families and teachers. She explained that the school administers satisfaction surveys to families at the end of each academic year. The survey responses frequently contained highly positive comments expressing gratitude and appreciation for the teachers. When these responses were shared with the teaching staff, they elicited strong emotional reactions:

We always do surveys at the end of the course for the families with certain questions, like your opinion of the winter festival, your opinion of the green routes, etc. We always leave open spaces for anything good or bad they want to say (...) But they tell us such nice things and don't stop thanking us. So last year, I broke it down by class groups and sent it to each tutor what their families said, anonymously (...) The response (from the teachers) was like, "Wow! How nice. Wow! What words!". Things like "Thank you for the effort", "Thank you for your work", "That material I saw, how good it was", "How patient you were with that child"

(Julia, Headmistress)

Fatima, one of the participating mothers, affirms this improvement in the relationship between families and the school. She identifies trust as a key factor, noting the transformation from their involvement in the DSG and the DMPCRC:

That's what I said before. It's like a little big family, there's trust, there's trust with the Headmistress, with the teachers, and the parents who get to know each other more and more, from different classes. Well, it's wonderful, because that's what trust is, sharing.

(Fatima, participating mother)

The involvement of mothers in the DSG and the DMPCRC has strengthened relationships between families, students, and teachers. The Headmistress explains that, since these mothers became involved, there has been a calmer and more peaceful coexistence in interactions with families. When a child reports a problem, these mothers enter the school to speak with teachers, thereby establishing a dialogue among families, students, and staff. The Headmistress also notes that the mothers make use of WhatsApp groups. When certain information begins to circulate,

the mothers participating in the DSG inform others that they can come into the school to ask questions and discuss the matter, as the school is an open space for families:

There is calmer now if an issue comes up, for example, a child comes out explaining this has happened in class. There is always a mother who comes in and asks questions, not before, but before it was a big deal. Now, they come in and ask, there is a dialogue, 'Hey, I've been told that this has happened, how can it be'. There's always a mum who takes action or there's always someone who says in the WhatsApp group, they are saying this and I have told them that if they want to know, they can go and talk to you, the doors are open to them here. There are always mums in the groups who are very clear that they can come here to talk, and, in that sense, there is a lot of peace. Things always happen, that's inevitable, there are 400 children, many adults. But there is confidence of saying 'You're worried, why don't you go and talk to the school', isn't there? That relaxes us all because they don't mistrust us and that's wonderful and that's because they come in, because they join the groups, because these mums come in and see that they are valued and that we listen to them and that their contributions are very good.

(Julia, Headmistress)

Fatima reaffirms the Headmistress's account. She states that being able to raise concerns and engage in dialogue at the school gives families confidence and increases their satisfaction with the school:

The truth is that they (families) have more confidence because a school where you can talk and expose if you have problems, anything, that's... the families, of course, are delighted.

(Fatima, participating mother)

Carmen, another participating mother, similarly notes that this unity between teachers and families fosters not only improved behavior among the children but also greater motivation for learning:

What I value the most is that it ultimately generates a lot of trust and makes you want to work in sync with school. If we are all united, the children will move forward, and I believe that is the most fundamental aspect. Because here, both teachers and parents want the children to succeed.

(Carmen, participating mother)

The perceptions shared by the Headmistress and participating mothers in their interviews indicate that the DMPCRC has contributed to building closer and more collaborative relationships between families and teachers, fostering trust and mutual understanding. The Headmistress highlighted that families now express gratitude toward teachers and approach the school calmly to address concerns, contrasting with previous situations of mistrust. Mothers described feeling part of a "big family" and emphasized that the school is perceived as an open space for dialogue, where problems can be discussed constructively. These perceptions also point to the role of continuous interaction through dialogue spaces and communication channels in creating a coexistence of confidence and respect. Mothers reported that this sense of unity motivates them to work in coordination with teachers, reinforcing shared goals for children's learning and well-being. Overall, these accounts show that trust-based relationships, as perceived by families and school staff, have become essential for improving coexistence and consolidating the educational community.

4. Discussion

This study addresses a gap in the literature by analyzing how participation in DSG influences non-academic mothers' involvement in the DMPCRC and its impact on school coexistence. While previous research has documented the benefits of DMPCRC for reducing violence and improving school coexistence (Villarejo-Carballido et al., 2019), no

studies had examined the role of family participation in DSG as a driver of these processes. Our findings provide new evidence that mothers who engage in DSG become key actors in promoting and sustaining DMPCRC implementation, broadening participation in decision-making spaces and contributing to improvements in coexistence within and beyond the school.

The results show that these mothers were not only present in assemblies but also played a leading role in mobilizing other families, fostering trust, and ensuring inclusive dialogue during the consensual definition of the coexistence rule. Their prior engagement in DSG strengthened their confidence and ability to argue based on research rather than opinion. This empowerment extended beyond individual participation, as these mothers encouraged others to join assemblies and actively participate in defining the school rule for coexistence. These findings align with previous studies highlighting the importance of family involvement for academic achievement and school coexistence (Jacobs, 2023; Kim, 2018; Rodríguez-Oramas et al., 2022; Shaeffer, 2002) and with research on dialogic approaches to conflict resolution (Patel, 2023; Steffensen et al., 2023), but they add a novel dimension by showing how DSG can redistribute power in decision-making processes traditionally dominated by professionals (Elster, 1998; Flecha & Soler, 2014).

The perceptions of the participating mothers indicate that the learning acquired in DSG was transferred to everyday interactions with children, enabling them to explain concepts such as upstander behavior through relatable examples. These practices reinforced rules that reject violence and value solidarity with victims (Flecha & INCLUD-ED Consortium, 2015). Teachers and families reported improvements in school coexistence characterized by more egalitarian dialogue, increased trust, and collaborative problem-solving. Importantly, perceived benefits extended to the home, families described more dialogic interactions and reduced violent behaviors, and to the community, where mothers promoted collective efforts toward violence-free environments. These spillover effects suggest that DSG and DMPCRC can function as catalysts for broader social transformation, creating networks of solidarity that transcend the school boundaries. The findings illustrate how DSG can foster equitable participation in school governance and strengthen women's leadership in creating safe, dialogic environments.

This study has limitations. It focuses on a single case in an urban elementary school, which constrains generalizability. As more studies of cases like this are carried out and replicated, the evidence will become stronger and more robust. However, this type of qualitative case study, developed in co-creation with participants, contributes to a deeper understanding of the processes that lead to social change. Most of these mothers had little or no prior participation in school life, and their involvement in DSG enabled them to become highly active and to bring in other families who had never participated before. Future research should explore these dynamics across diverse contexts, include other caregivers, and examine the sustainability of impacts over time, as well as how DSG and DMPCRC interact with other educational actions.

5. Conclusion

Findings reveal that mothers who engaged in DSG played a pivotal role in mobilizing other families to participate in DMPCRC processes, introducing scientific evidence-based arguments during assemblies and classroom discussions to define the school's coexistence rule. Their prior engagement with scientific texts empowered them to participate confidently, fostering inclusive and egalitarian dialogue among children, teachers, and families.

Beyond enhancing coexistence and promoting non-violent conflict resolution and upstander behaviors, this involvement strengthened trust-based relationships between families and teachers and generated positive spillover effects in the broader community. These results underscore the transformative potential of DSG for advancing SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality) by creating spaces

where traditionally excluded women lead evidence-based decision-making processes.

Theoretical implications include reinforcing the role of dialogic learning and communicative methodology as effective frameworks for promoting social cohesion and democratic school governance. Practical implications point to the scalability of DSG and DMPCRC as strategies for improving school coexistence and fostering family engagement in contexts of social complexity.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Alba Crespo-Lopez: Writing – original draft, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Esther Oliver:** Writing – original draft, Investigation, Formal analysis, Conceptualization. **Laura Ruiz-Eugenio:** Writing – review & editing, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Cristina Pulido:** Writing – review & editing, Formal analysis, Conceptualization.

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Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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