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# Cocreating Awareness and Fostering Action on Violence Resilience

## *Urban Film-making*

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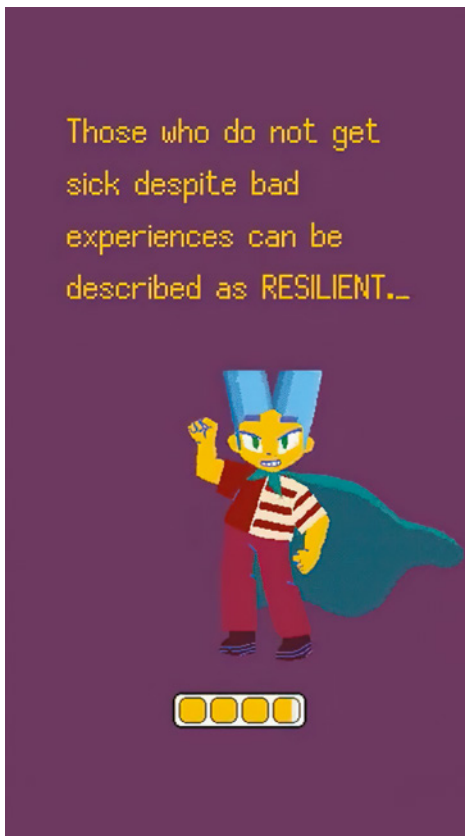
## Abstract

Adolescents experiencing physical abuse by parents range from 20 to 25 percent internationally and in Switzerland, which significantly impacts their socio-emotional development. As part of a Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) project, the authors aimed to strengthen the resilient development of youth despite such violence. A participatory, design-based approach was applied to involve adolescents in the development process. In co-creation workshops conducted by the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI), adolescent participants collaborated with professional video illustrators to create appealing, youth-centered video content. These videos are intended for use on social media and educational platforms to raise awareness about violence

resilience, improve access to support services, and facilitate effective learning. By combining current scientific insights from resilience research with creative methods of youth engagement, the project aims to empower adolescents and produces sustainable tools for knowledge transfer. The videos are intended to inform practitioners, shape future research, and create sustainable products for science–practice transfer.

### Keywords

urban film-making – resilience – violence – youth-centered – cocreation – adolescence – socio-emotional development



**FEATURE** This article comprises two videos, which can be viewed [here](#) (and [here](#)) and [here](#) (and [here](#)).

## 1 Introduction

Extensive international research indicates that exposure to physical abuse by one's parents or legal guardians is widespread among adolescents (Straus, Gelles & Steinmetz, 2017). Studies suggest that the prevalence in Switzerland is 19 % (Enzmann et al., 2018; Kassis et al., 2022) and in the European Union around 20–25 % (Enzmann et al., 2018; Kapella, 2011; Kassis et al., 2018). Such experiences of abuse often go unreported, especially in adolescence. The likelihood of violent offenses being reported to the police increases significantly with age, the adolescent age group only reports around a quarter of incidents due to, among other reasons, fear of social repercussions or retaliation (Bosick et al., 2012). The negative effects of parental physical abuse on adolescents are well documented, including its impact on social, emotional, and personal development. Parental physical abuse is associated with negative impacts such as depression, anxiety, and aggression in adolescence (Evans et al., 2008; Kassis et al., 2018; Moylan et al., 2010), which extend into early adulthood (Tschoeke et al., 2021).

Few studies have been conducted to examine pathways of resilience that help adolescents break out of the cycle of violence and develop positively in socio-emotional terms into adulthood. Resilience is understood as “the capacity of a system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten the viability, function, or development of the system” (Masten, 2014). Because resilient development is related to specific risk factors (Luthar et al., 2000), the term “violence resilience” is used below to refer to resilient development as a response to experiences of violence.

Based on Masten's definition, we define violence resilience as the capacity to remain adaptive despite experiencing parental violence. As behavioral issues (for example, aggressive, disruptive, depressive, anxious, and antisocial behavior) are the most common consequences of experiencing violence that schools focus on. We understand violence-resilient behavior to be normative socio-emotional development in the context of school and youth. This involves the ability to build stable relationships, regulate emotions, and utilize supportive connections within social networks (Ungar et al., 2017).

Resilience also emphasizes the systemic context, i.e. how family, school, peer groups and other environmental systems influence the development of protective mechanisms and adaptability (Masten & Barnes, 2018). Central to this are contextual risk and protective factors, such as negative teacher–student relationships, a negative school climate and violence among peers, or supportive relationships, positive peer interactions and a safe school and family environment. As Ungar et al. (2017) ask, “Which factors nurture and sustain

resilience, for which children, in which contexts, when they are exposed to what threats to their psychosocial development?" (p. 9). Therefore, we are interested in finding out *how individual and social protective and risk factors for adolescent resilience can be translated into an accessible, age-appropriate, and ethical video format*. The aim is to encourage active involvement as a translational activity of youth throughout the production process, creating engaging media products that serve as educational resources.

In the present article, we first highlight the participatory methodological framework. Subsequently, we present the results from the video development process, including the narratives and resilience motifs visualized. In the final section, we discuss the practical implications for youth education and provide an outlook on the potential of future participatory media-based interventions.

This study takes a qualitative, participatory approach, working with adolescents to develop innovative video formats addressing resilience in the face of violence. In line with process-oriented research, the focus is on the creative development process and the participants' own perspectives. There is no claim to quantitative impact measurement or generalizability; rather, the resulting media products are intended to provide inspiration and examples for participatory educational processes. The subjective and context-dependent results are a reflection of the possibilities and limitations of participatory creative research.

### **1.1 *How Can We Empower Young People without Burdening Them?***

Videos have been shown to be an effective educational format for promoting mental health awareness, especially among adolescents, as an interactive, low-threshold, and diverse medium. For example, Seedaket et al. (2020) demonstrated that animated videos on mental health literacy significantly improved knowledge and reduced stigma among youths, while Hosely et al. (2019) found that video-based psychoeducation increased adolescents' intentions to seek help. Psychoeducation, the process of teaching people about mental health conditions, has proven to be a useful and effective educational strategy that is often associated with mental health prevention and intervention, particularly in a school context (e.g. Das et al. 2016).

Social media platforms such as YouTube, the most frequently used video platform by young people in Europe, are therefore a suitable way to obtain information or to prevent potential risk situations in the future. Jiménez and Vozmediano (2020) show that YouTube functions as an information source for adolescents, with its accessibility and peer-driven content enhancing engagement. At the same time, they caution that the platform's algorithm can amplify

misleading content, underscoring the importance of developing evidence-based and carefully curated resources. Our project responds to this challenge by producing videos that combine scientific findings with adolescents' symbolic narratives. In line with research on narrative learning (Gauntlett, 2007), we argue that visualizing protective and risk factors in playful, game-inspired formats helps youths identify with characters and scenarios, which in turn fosters self-reflection and recognition of their own resources.

The methodological approach of participatory video has proven to be a suitable one for representing children and adolescents as experts on their own lives by making videos collaboratively (Milne et al., 2016; Iwase, 2024) and incorporating their perspectives. Milne's participatory video methodology emphasizes that video is not only a means of communication but also a process in which children and adolescents generate knowledge through collaboration and symbolic representation. In our project, this principle was applied by involving adolescents in storyboarding, visual design, and narrative development, ensuring that the final videos reflected their lived perspectives rather than externally imposed messages. Walsh's critique complements this by cautioning against interpreting such participation as simple "empowerment" at the individual level; instead, it highlights the need to acknowledge systemic conditions that shape young people's capacities to act.

We explicitly addressed this concern by embedding resilience not as an individual achievement but as a dynamic, systemic process that unfolds in interaction with peers, schools, and supportive environments. Taken together, these perspectives informed our conceptualization of video as both a participatory research method and an educational tool: the medium functions simultaneously as a space for co-learning, as a vehicle to represent adolescents' own symbolic language of resilience, and as a means of translating scientific insights into accessible resources for practice. This collaborative approach is evident in resilience studies and participatory action research and underscores the importance of co-learning, elevating student voices, and engaging in collective decision-making rather than relying solely on top-down directives (Raanaas et al., 2020).

However, Walsh (2014) argues that the political presumptions of empowerment and translational activity must be critically reflected in the participatory process of video production and its relationship with academic research. She highlights the underlying politics of participatory videos with the aim of pursuing social justice in the longer term. Walsh criticizes the idea that an individual can emancipate themselves in a system characterized by power structures by participatory video approaches. This could act as "a burden on

individuals without power to emancipate themselves within what is presented as an equitable system, as though they are free agents and not part of a larger social structure" (Walsh, 2014, p. 406), she emphasizes, in accordance with the modern systemic understanding of resilience. The importance of participatory videos as a method lies in recognizing that we are not alone with our burdens and for developing empathy for others, which is an effective tool for creating social change. This understanding argues for a participatory but still cautionary approach, in line with Walsh's critique, for a collaborative coproduction of videos on the topic of violence resilience to take a step toward social change in the sense of a nonviolent upbringing and not an individual task to become resilient.

The underlying understanding of resilience recognizes that it develops at individual, social, and contextual levels, such as family and school (Masten & Barnes, 2018; Ungar, 2016) and therefore Walsh's critique on individual responsibility. Although individual resources such as self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-determination are crucial to resilience development (Kassis et al., 2022), it is equally important to reduce social and contextual risk factors and strengthen protective environmental influences to promote resilience holistically (Aksoy et al., 2023; Favre et al., 2023; Kassis et al., 2013; 2018; 2022). To convey this message authentically, the videos were co-created with young people, allowing their perspectives, experiences, and protective factors to be made visible.

## 2 Methodology and Methods

We aimed to translate research on socio-emotional development in the context of experiences of violence in a participatory and collaborative way. To make this knowledge accessible to our target groups, educational professionals and young people, we co-created a game-inspired animated video together with young people, illustrators, and social workers. The video made in co-creation with the students planned intent was for it to demonstrate how resilience can develop from the interplay of individual and contextual protective factors. This can empower individuals to take a proactive approach, while also conveying the message that young people are not solely responsible for their own development. The main character's journey – overcoming obstacles with the help of friends, teachers, and self-awareness – aims to illustrate the dynamic, systemic nature of resilience as described in the literature. By visualizing these processes and communicating scientific knowledge in a playful way, the video could not only raise awareness, but also enables young people to recognize their own protective resources and risk factors.

### 2.1 *Phase 1 – Preparations*

In collaboration with National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) Switzerland and a dedicated research team (Céline A. Favre, Wassilis Kassis and Dilan Aksoy), NCBI Switzerland conducted a total of six half-day workshops entitled *Keine Daheimnisse* [No Secrets about at Home]. In phase 1, adolescents aged 12 to 20 in German- and French-speaking parts of Switzerland participated between February and May 2024. NCBI Switzerland is a non-profit association that promotes respectful interaction and reduces prejudice and conflict through training courses and workshops, including violence prevention. The *Keine Daheimnisse* workshops were designed to be age- and topic-appropriate, addressing in a safe environment the experience of violence in educational institutions and interpersonal relationships. The NCBI developed the basis for the workshops, which has been implemented and evaluated. These workshops were revised for the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) study on which this publication is based. The aim was to reduce barriers to seeking help and foster resilience factors, such as prosocial behaviors and teacher support. Another key focus was resilience to violence, which the research team prepared based on its research findings over the years (see Aksoy et al., 2022; Favre et al., 2022; 2023; 2024; Kassis et al., 2022; 2023; 2024) and thus incorporated into the existing workshops.

### 2.2 *Phase 2 – The Workshops*

A total of 119 adolescents took part in the workshops. Recruitment took place via existing institutional structures, particularly via schools (in cooperation with school social workers) and SEMO programs (motivational semesters for professional integration, typically targeting vulnerable or socioeconomically disadvantaged youth). The schools contacted NCBI directly for the “Keine Daheimnisse” workshops to be conducted at their locations for a specific school class and were therefore not contacted by us. The research team then asked the teachers responsible if they would like to voluntarily participate in the study. Next, the workshop participants were then given a consent form. In the case of minors, their legal guardians’ consent was also obtained. Participants received no financial or material incentives for their voluntary participation. The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Teacher Education at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland.

### 2.3 *Phase 3 – Expert Groups*

The four-hour workshops followed a participatory approach (Stoecklin, 2013), encouraging young people to share their perspectives and engage in the development process. This phase of the project culminated in the formation

of “expert groups”, in which volunteer participants, with consent forms, collaborated to design video materials focused on violence resilience. After the workshop in the morning for all workshop participants, the young people had the opportunity to explore the content in more depth in the afternoon in expert groups, based on their interests. This in-depth exploration provided an opportunity to work on the videos. A total of 12 adolescents as part of voluntary expert groups, aged 12 to 16, participated in the creation of the videos in the afternoon after the NCBI Workshop.

In collaboration with video illustrators, video ideas were developed and visually implemented. For this purpose, the two independent video designers made and incorporated drawings to incorporate not only the ideas but also the optics that the adolescents chose. Supervised by NCBI experts and video illustrators, the participants were guided to participate in answering the central research question: *How can protective and risk factors for adolescent resilience be translated into an accessible, age-appropriate, and ethical video format?*

The aim was to sensitize and strengthen the topic’s relevance as well as the acceptance and identification of the target group with the video as the final result. The approach in this article is innovative because, the videos were cocreated (i.e., empirical findings from four years of the project were prepared for the young people, edited with them, and animated with professional illustrators to create awareness-raising and informational videos based on the young people’s ideas and narratives).

#### **2.4 Phase 4 – Video Cocreation**

The two independent video illustrators had creative freedom to implement the videos while having to incorporate scientific findings and youths’ perspectives into their work. This had the aim of integrating design-based choices that were also accepted in the illustrator community and therefore more accessible for a wide range of actors. The adolescents were able to choose from a list of empirically evidenced risk factors for resilience that they could match with important protective factors, such as social support, self-awareness, and self-efficacy, and cocreate the video.

Although professional video illustrators carried out the technical production, the adolescent participants were involved throughout the process. They developed initial ideas and storyboards through drawings and discussions, which formed the conceptual basis for the videos. The production followed an iterative cocreation model: the video designers presented drafts to the participants, who provided feedback and suggested changes to visual and narrative elements. This dialogic and collaborative process ensured that the final videos reflected the youths’ perspectives, priorities, and creative input, in line with key principles of participatory media methodologies. The research team

then evaluated the video to secure a modern and empirically valid resilience understanding.

A highlight of the project was the development of a “gameplay” video inspired by the adolescents’ ideas and the importance they gave their phones during the workshops. The main character, whose appearance and personality the participants co-designed, had to overcome risk factors in the game and use protective factors to strengthen resilience. A dynamic “resilience barometer” reflected progress and setbacks to illustrate the concept of unstable, non-individualistic resilience. The interactive format contained two levels so as not to overtax the target group’s attention span. At the same time, it allowed for a deeper engagement with the topic. This format was chosen so that young people could watch videos on their smartphones. After the workshop, the young people had the opportunity to follow the video production process by providing feedback and input during online meetings in which the illustrators presented the video process.

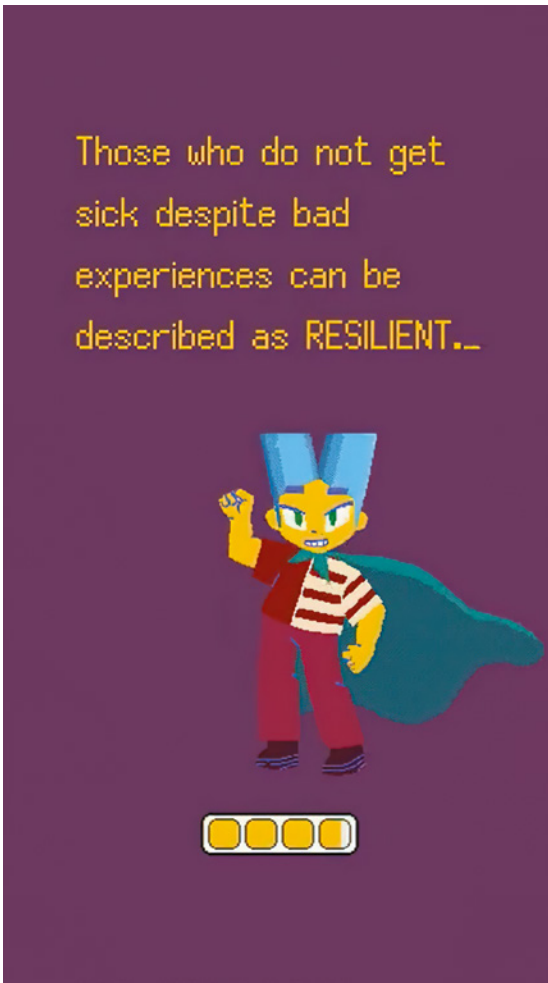
### 2.5 *Phase 5 – Sequence Analysis*


In phase 5, sequence analysis transformed the cocreated videos into rich data sources that helped us identify how students conceptualize resilience through narrative structure, visual symbolism, and collaborative problem-solving. This method combines creative expression with empirical research and ensures that the dissemination of complex topics connects with audiences in a meaningful way. We used sequence analysis as our methodological approach to not only record the narrative structures in the videos but also to investigate how young people construct their life-worlds and communicate via visual media. The integration of sequence analysis made it possible to uncover patterns and transitions that often go unnoticed in standard content analyses. Following Gauntlett (2007), we view these creative methods as tools that go beyond verbal self-descriptions and allow participants to express implicit dimensions of their experiences and identities. Involving the target group in the video process as participatory research also allowed for the co-construction of meaning as truly collaborative. This assumption was proven when we showed the videos at a conference and received consistently positive feedback that the videos are not typical educational videos but appeal to people on a different level.

## 3 Results

The following results present how adolescents’ experiences and resilience strategies were translated into visual and narrative elements of the cocreated video. Each section of the video reflects one or more protective and/or risk

factors as defined in resilience research. These factors illustrate how these were conceptualized through participatory design methods. By aligning the narrative sequences with our central research question, “How do protective and risk factors for adolescent resilience can be transformed into an accessible, age-appropriate, and ethically sound video format?” we demonstrate the translational process from empirical insight to educational media. The structure of the results follows the video’s chronological design to show how resilience concepts were made visible and relatable through adolescent storytelling and symbolism.



VIDEO 1 “PLAY – Resilience as a Game – Mission 1 ”. (See [here](#) and [here](#).)



VIDEO 2 “PLAY – Resilience as a Game – Mission 2”.  
(See [here](#) and [here](#).)

### 3.1 *Introduction to the Game Narrative and Psychoeducation* (00:05–00:36)

The video’s game design followed the narrative structure of the adolescent expert groups, described in the methods section. Stage 1 begins with a demonstration of the prevalence of physical violence in adolescence and its consequences on socio-emotional development (00:05–00:27). This is particularly intended to serve psychoeducation, which, according to Cohen et al. (2006), is an important component in addressing potentially traumatizing experiences, such as experiencing parental physical violence. This is followed by a section

on resilient development (00:27–00:36), leading into the game narrative developed with adolescents.

### 3.2 *Symbolic Representation of Trauma (00:36–01:00)*

When conceptualizing the videos, the adolescents interpreted the consequences of physical violence as being incomplete. The young people's interpretation that the experience of physical violence leaves one incomplete shows a deep understanding of the impact of trauma. This metaphor is creative and insightful and illustrates the deep emotional and psychological impact of violence. Firstly, the adolescents wanted the main character to not have all their limbs when the game started and to gain limbs with the development of resilience. Here, the cocreation process took place. We as the research and expert team adapted the concept of not being complete with colors rather than limbs, to avoid equating imagery of physical disability with being incomplete. Trauma was, therefore, depicted as body parts without color, which were then recolored over the course of the game to show resilient development (00:52–01:00).

The original idea of young people recovering over time after trauma was metaphorically important for healing and recovery. The restoration of color to the protagonist's body was interpreted by participants as a restoration of agency and identity. Several adolescents noted during feedback sessions that the visual transformation helped them imagine how to "reclaim parts of themselves" after difficult experiences. In this way, agency and identity were not abstract concepts but were visually embodied in the character's ability to act and build relationships. This reflects current resilience theory (Masten, 2014), which emphasizes adaptation as an ongoing and dynamic process.

### 3.3 *Navigating Obstacles and the Role of Help-seeking (01:00–01:53)*

This metaphorical representation of trauma with a fragmented and colorless body was not only symbolic, but also influenced the game mechanics, chosen by the adolescents. In their view, progress in the game should reflect the gradual recovery, thus linking visual recovery with the concept of restoring agency and identity. This illustrates resilience as a dynamic and nonlinear process: recovery is neither immediate nor linear but occurs step by step through interaction with the environment and the resources provided. In line with common game mechanics, the main character overcomes certain obstacles and completes tasks with the support of his environment. If the tasks are solved together, the main character comes a little closer to resilient development.

At 01:23, external support is added for the first time, in the form of a character the adolescents created: a monkey that will accompany the main character and help him overcome the first obstacle. It is worth noting that young people could have chosen other animals – such as an elephant, which could represent

steadiness but also slowness, or a dog, which symbolizes loyalty – but they opted for a dynamic, friendly, and sometimes stubborn helper. This choice emphasizes the value they place on resourcefulness, agility, and a proactive approach to challenges. This could suggest that building resilience is, from an adolescent perspective, not just about support but also about embracing change and facing difficulties with an open and inventive mindset. However, it could also indicate that the characteristics attributed to the monkey can also be understood as a prototype for successful friendships: funny, energetic, and a loyal companion.

The introduction of the monkey character seemingly illustrates how adolescents also perceive resilience resources externally. Instead of illustrating resilience as an internal characteristic, they symbolized it through a playful, adaptable companion who could support the protagonist. This is consistent with systemic resilience models (Ungar, 2005; Masten & Barnes, 2018), which emphasize the importance of relational and environmental support in overcoming adversity.

The young people chose water as the first obstacle because they explored the idea that after such a devastating experience, sometimes one feels like they are drowning. This also seems interesting because, for example, the loss of air, or the loss of grip, could also have been in the foreground. The fact that the participants opted for the feeling of drowning (i.e., the slowly and steadily rising water) seems symbolically important. Trauma seems to be a gradual, threatening process in the narrative of young people that grows worse over time.

The main character asks the monkey for help, enabling the main character agency. At 01:42, an information board appears, explaining that seeking help is a protective factor, reinforcing the idea that reaching out is an act of agency.

#### 3.4 *Resilience as a Dynamic Process: Support Tools and Storm Passage (01:53–02:54)*

This scene supports resilience theories that emphasize the crucial role of supportive relationships and the development of agency in overcoming adversity (Masten, 2014; Ungar, 2011). In the expert groups, the adolescents determined that after experiences of physical violence, seeking and accepting help can be important. Participants also shared that seeking help can be a personal challenge, highlighting how important it is to lower the threshold for seeking support in schools and other systems.

Help-seeking also unlocks a map and a compass that the main character can use for further gameplay. After a wild ride through a storm together with the monkey, the main character and his companion successfully complete stage 1 (02:33–02:39). For adolescents, the storm symbolizes the emotional turbulence that can follow such experiences. This sequence illustrates that internal action

and external resources strengthen resilience. The map and compass symbolize the knowledge and guidance that become available when young people recognize their need for support and take steps to obtain it. The young people's decision to include these elements emphasizes their intuitive understanding of resilience as a dynamic process that involves internal and external resources. In the video, this is followed by a note that resilient development is not a static but a dynamic process (Masten, 2021) to further underline this important information (02:44–02:54).

### 3.5 *Loneliness and Isolation in the Ice World (Stage II: 00:00–00:50)*

In stage II, the main character and the monkey are in a lonely ice landscape. During discussion in the expert groups, it was discussed that victims of physical violence can experience feelings of being alone and isolated. This insight led the adolescents to conceptualize the frosty and lonely ice environment (00:13–00:19). This creative choice importantly illustrates the psychological impact of violence and emphasizes how important addressing feelings of isolation in resilience-building measures is. By giving these latent feelings, a concrete form in the video, the young people show their understanding of the complex inner world of those affected by trauma. Again, participants could have chosen any type of environment, such as a desert or the sea, but they selected a setting where movement is essential for survival. This choice of narrative shows their tendency to be proactive and suggests that in the context of the story, active engagement is seen as key to overcoming challenges.

Adolescent's proactivity is not only reflected in their ability to activate their own strengths and coping strategies but also includes the ability to specifically recognize and access resources in their social environment and use them for their own benefit. This is in line with Michael Ungar's understanding of resilience (navigate and negotiate), which positions resilience as the interplay between individual behavior and the involvement of external sources of support (Ungar, 2005). The participants seem to intuitively combine personal and contextual resources in a flexible and situation-appropriate manner.

### 3.6 *The Power of Friendships and Symbolic Empowerment (00:50–01:00)*

In this frosty environment, the main character meets a new friend, who accompanies them further, which emphasizes that supportive friendships can be a decisive protective factor in overcoming adversity. This leads to another information board that shows supportive friendships can be a very important protective factor (00:50–00:59), unlocking a feather that can be used later in the game. The acquisition of a feather – which is unlocked because of this supportive connection – symbolizes the empowerment and new opportunities that

arise from trusting relationships. The feather can be used later in the game and symbolizes the ongoing benefits of social support and the resources it provides for further challenges. This offers a positive spillover effect, which in contrast to vicious circles, achieves positive effects over time.

### 3.7 *Confronting the Giant: The Weight of Cumulative Risk (01:10–02:06)*

The expert groups created a final opponent, a giant (01:10), which was chosen because the burdens adolescents experiencing violence face often feel too overwhelming to tackle alone. This metaphor emphasizes how insurmountable challenges can seem when they must be overcome how they can transform repeatedly (from water to ice to the giant) and lead to further risk factors. In resilience research, this metaphor aligns with the high chances of being the target of further risk factors and seldom one risk factor alone. In the case of parental violence experiences, further risk factors can, for example, occur in the form of peer rejection (Favre et al., 2024) and teacher verbal abuse (Kassis et al., 2010).

To defeat the giant, another environmental protective factor is needed, a supportive teacher (02:06). With the teacher's presence, the lonely cold disappears and even the final giant opponent can be defeated. The key role of a supportive environment in resilient development is highlighted in the following information panel (03:57–04:07).

### 3.8 *Insight: Resilience as Process and Systemic Support (02:06–End)*

To reinforce the idea that resilience is not a one-time achievement, the video ends with a preview of a new level. This supports the systemic understanding of resilience as a dynamic, ongoing process and emphasizes the interplay between individual agency and external resources. Each of these scenes, cocreated with adolescent participants, demonstrates how protective and risk factors can be translated into an age-appropriate, ethical, and creative video format. This participatory approach ensures that the final product reflects authentic youth perspectives and resonates with their experiences.

## 4 Discussion and Implications

We explored how protective and risk factors for adolescent resilience, particularly in the context of physical parental abuse, can be translated into a meaningful, ethical, and age-appropriate video format. Through a participatory cocreation process, it was possible to develop an educational tool that incorporates scientific findings while resonating with the experiences and

symbolic language of youth. The results demonstrate that adolescents intuitively use metaphor and narrative to describe their socio-emotional processes, aligning closely with contemporary systemic and ecological models of resilience (Masten, 2014; Ungar, 2021). Their choice of game-inspired imagery and symbolic helpers illustrates how youth perceive and navigate adversity in relational and structural contexts. These findings support existing literature that advocates for youth-centered, participatory approaches in resilience promotion and psychoeducation (Gauntlett, 2007). Future studies should explore the longitudinal impact of such cocreated videos on youth awareness and help-seeking tendencies.

The study of fostering resilience in translational processes has come a long way thanks to the commitment to impactful results and willingness to use new approaches to provide better outcomes. Specifically, resilience research focuses on specific adaptations in systems, not just the individual, highlighting these dynamic systems' capacity to withstand disruptions or recover from them (Masten, 2015). Explicitly, in the domain of positive youth development at schools, a critical question is to what extent schools are positioning their students in a cocreated developmental process to be successful and whether schools as a system develop with adolescents' developmental socio-emotional needs (Masten, 2019). Such alignment between the school as an organization and adolescents is relevant to promoting young people's healthy development and preventing trauma implicated in socio-emotional conditions such as depression, anxiety disorders, dissociation, and aggression (Cantave et al., 2023).

The insights gained from the sequences and illustrations of the adolescents' lives provide a comprehensive view of the everyday realities and relational dynamics that shape young people's social contexts. The results in the form of the video contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how young individuals negotiate adversity. This perspective is extremely valuable for researchers, educators, and policymakers alike in developing interventions and initiatives that are aligned with adolescents' lived realities and experiences.

Our sequence-analyzed study shows how young people translate this systemic (Masten, 2015; Ungar, 2011) perspective narratively: Resilience emerges here as a relational process in which external challenges are overcome through creative symbolization and the gradual activation of resources. In the school context, the question arises as to what extent educational institutions promote such cocreated developmental processes.

The sequences the young people designed – such as prioritizing the monkey as an internal resource over the teacher figure – make it clear that promoting resilience requires spaces for autonomous processes before external systems

can intervene effectively. This aligns with Deci and Ryan's (2000) call for autonomy-promoting environments but goes beyond this by placing Michael Ungar's (2023) negotiation agency at the center. The choice of metaphors (e.g., drowning, incomplete, the proactive use of supporting figures) makes it clear that young people intuitively grasp the burden of experiencing violence and the importance of protective factors. This emphasizes the importance of participatory approaches, for the activation of life-worlds always simplifies learning processes.

It can therefore be seen that interventions can be designed much more effectively if the target group's perspective is considered and thus spoken in their "language."

This process provides valuable guidance for researchers, educational professionals, and creative individuals who want to work with young people in resilience-oriented or co-creative projects. It highlights the importance of creating developmentally appropriate environments for authentic expression and agency. Such participatory practices not only provide more meaningful insights but also strengthen young people's ability to take action and their sense of responsibility.

Furthermore, the study highlights the potential for a reorientation of public discourse about young people. Rather than viewing them as passive consumers of societal norms and cultural outcomes, our findings highlight their role as active cocreators of their social environment.

Another important implication is the focus on inclusivity. Young people's individual realities and various perspectives are considered in educational research, as are the visualization of various views and experiences. This inclusive view enriches the understanding of young people's experiences of family violence and challenges homogenized narratives that often dominate discussions about youth. It also highlights the need for approaches that prioritize equity and representation, ensuring that vulnerable and underrepresented groups' voices are heard.

## 5 Limitations

Several limitations must be considered. This study took a qualitative, participatory approach with the aim of developing a video format together with young people. A quantitative impact analysis was not part of the research design. Limitations arise from the composition of the participant groups, subjective interpretation, and the restriction to the medium of video. Individual perspectives, especially those of less active or marginalized young people, may

be underrepresented. The visualizations and narratives developed reflect the specific experiences of the participants and should be understood as a process-oriented exploration, not as generalizable findings or evidence-based interventions. First, the study was based on a limited number of NCBI workshops with participants recruited through existing institutional structures. As such, the sample may reflect a degree of bias, particularly among adolescents already engaged with supportive systems. The youth involved in the study came predominantly from school and vocational transition settings, which may limit the findings' generalizability to other youth populations in Switzerland. Second, although the process emphasized participation, it is possible that not all voices were equally heard, especially those of quieter and vulnerable individuals. Third, the interpretation of visual and metaphorical elements is inherently subjective and shaped by the research team's perspective. Finally, this study focuses on the development process of one media format and does not offer comparative insights into other formats or interventions.

## 6 Conclusion

In summary, the study not only expands our theoretical knowledge of adolescent's social reality but also offers practical insights into how to improve youth engagement and representation, particularly in the context of experiencing family violence. First, it demonstrates that adolescents are capable of articulating complex multidimensional emotional and social realities when provided with creative formats, such as video co-designs. Second, it shows that metaphors and symbolic narratives are suitable tools for expressing trauma-related experiences and resilience mechanisms. Third, it emphasizes the importance of schools not only as educational contexts but also as socio-emotional systems in which protective and risk factors interact. Finally, the project offers a replicable model of how to ethically engage adolescents in cocreating knowledge transfer tools that are grounded in research and adapted to their realities.

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## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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