REFACS

**Original Article**
**Rev. Fam., Ciclos Vida Saúde Contexto Soc.**
*http://seer.uftm.edu.br/revistaeletronica/index.php/refacs/index*
**ISSN**: 2318-8413 DOI: 10.18554/refacs.v14i00.9095

# Participatory development and validation by the target audience of a booklet on violence

## *Produção participativa e validação pelo público-alvo de cartilha sobre violência*

## *Elaboración participativa y validación por el público destinatario de una cartilla sobre violencia*

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**Received:** 02/05/2026 **Accepted:** 19/10/2026 **Published:** 18/11/2026

**Abstract:**
**Objective:** to describe the development of an educational resource in the form of a booklet on violence in the school environment, created by teachers and researchers, as well as its validation by the target audience. **Methods:** a methodological study with a qualitative and quantitative approach, conducted at a full-time school in the northern region of the state of Espírito Santo, Brazil, between 2022 and 2023. Teachers of Middle School provided empirical material – including imagery and narratives – through the "Creative and Sensitive Method," which informed the creation of the booklet. The Content Validity Index (CVI) was used, and the validation process considered adolescents as the target audience for the material. **Results:** fifteen teachers participated in a workshop on the development of educational technologies, and 83 adolescents took part in the content validation. The booklet, titled "Peaceful Coexistence Patrol: Good Manners Creates Kindness," achieved a Content Validity Index of 0.89. Spanning 31 pages, the booklet addresses best practices for coexistence within the school setting, aiming to foster a more harmonious and secure environment for students. **Conclusion:** a booklet was developed and validated, with the potential to serve as a strategy for preventing violence in the school environment. Violence within the school context is a complex, multifaceted issue that requires integrated and collaborative approaches between the education and health sectors.
**Keywords**: School violence; Educational and promotional materials; Adolescent health; Community-Based participatory research; Validation study.

**Resumo:**
**Objetivo**: descrever a produção de um material educativo no formato de cartilha sobre violência no ambiente escolar, desenvolvido por professores e pesquisadores, bem como sua validação pelo público-alvo. **Método**: pesquisa metodológica de abordagem qualitativa e quantitativa, realizada em uma escola de ensino integral no Norte do Espírito Santo entre 2022 e 2023 com professores do Ensino Fundamental II que forneceram material empírico — conteúdo imagético e narrativas — por meio do Método Criativo e Sensível, subsidiando a produção da cartilha. Utilizou-se o Índice de Validade de Conteúdo e na validação considerou-se os adolescentes como público alvo do material. **Resultados**: participaram da oficina de produção de tecnologias educacionais 15 professores, e 83 adolescentes realizaram a validação de conteúdo. O material intitulado "Patrulha da boa convivência em: Boas maneiras geram gentileza", obteve Índice de Validade de Conteúdo de 0,89. A cartilha, composta por 31 páginas, aborda boas práticas de convivência no ambiente escolar, com vistas à construção de um espaço mais harmonioso e seguro para os estudantes. **Conclusão**: foi produzida e validada uma cartilha com potencial de ser empregada como estratégias de prevenção à violência no ambiente escolar. A violência no contexto escolar configura-se como um problema complexo e multifacetado, que demanda abordagens integradas e colaborativas entre os setores de educação e saúde.
**Palavras-chave:** Violência escolar; Materiais educativos e de divulgação; Saúde do adolescente; Pesquisa participativa baseada na comunidade; Estudo de validação.

**Resumen:**
**Objetivo:** describir la elaboración de un material educativo en formato de cartilla sobre la violencia en el entorno escolar, desarrollado por docentes e investigadores, así como su validación por el público destinatario. **Método**: investigación metodológica con enfoque cualitativo y cuantitativo, realizada en una escuela de jornada completa del norte del estado de Espírito Santo entre 2022 y 2023, con docentes de los últimos cuatro años de la enseñanza fundamental, quienes proporcionaron material empírico —contenido visual y narraciones— mediante el Método Creativo y Sensible, que sirvió de base para la elaboración de la cartilla. Se utilizó el Índice de Validez de Contenido y, en la validación, se consideró a los adolescentes como público destinatario del material. **Resultados**: participaron 15 docentes en el taller de elaboración de tecnologías educativas y 83 adolescentes realizaron la validación de contenido. El material, titulado «Patrulla de la buena convivencia en: Los buenos modales generan amabilidad», obtuvo un Índice de Validez de Contenido de 0,89. La cartilla, compuesta por 31 páginas, aborda buenas prácticas de convivencia en el entorno escolar, con el objetivo de construir un espacio más armonioso y seguro para los estudiantes. **Conclusión**: se elaboró y validó una cartilla con potencial para ser utilizada como estrategia de prevención de la violencia en el entorno escolar. La violencia en el contexto escolar constituye un problema complejo y multifacético que requiere enfoques integrados y colaborativos entre los sectores de educación y salud.
**Palabras clave**: Violencia escolar; Materiales educativos y de divulgación; Salud del adolescente; Investigación participativa basada en la comunidad; Estudio de validación.

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## INTRODUCTION

Violence is defined as the use of physical force or power – whether through acts or threats – against oneself, another person, or a group/community, which may result in suffering, death, psychological harm, impaired development, or deprivation, whether immediate or in the future. Children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable to violence[1,2]. In the school setting, this reality manifests as aggressive behaviors capable of causing physical, emotional, or psychological harm to students, teachers, or staff – ranging from physical assaults to instances of bullying, verbal abuse, sexual violence, and acts of vandalism[3,4].

The World Health Organization (WHO)[5] reported that half of the world's children – approximately 1 billion children – are affected by physical, sexual, or psychological violence each year, suffering injuries, disability, and death because countries have failed to implement the strategies established to protect them

Given this global scenario, addressing this issue aligns directly with the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda – specifically Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) – which sets a global target to end the abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence and torture against children[6]. Therefore, it is essential to establish violence prevention strategies aimed at creating practical and accessible tools that foster awareness and engagement among adolescents, with the goal of contributing significantly to the creation of safer and healthier school environments.

Working through an intersectoral network, especially in partnership with the health and education sectors, is a fundamental strategy for addressing violence against adolescents[7,8]. This collaboration directly addresses the necessary integration between SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG 4 (Quality Education), which calls for ensuring safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all[6].

School plays a role in the lives of children and adolescents that extends beyond the purely educational, especially for those in situations of social vulnerability. It is considered the primary institution for identifying instances of violence and the most suitable setting for addressing violence prevention[9,10].

The School Health Program (*Programa Saúde na Escola* – PSE) plays a crucial role in fostering ongoing coordination between the education and health sectors. With the aim of improving students' quality of life, the PSE creates safer and healthier school environments, establishing a permanent collaboration that enriches both the health and the education of students[11].

The thematic workbook “Promoting a Culture of Peace and Human Rights,” developed by the PSE, serves as an educational strategy designed to empower adolescents, fostering practices of peaceful and respectful coexistence within schools[12].

However, despite the relevance of these initiatives and the international commitments undertaken through the SDGs, there is a notable scarcity of research on the effectiveness of prevention and intervention strategies regarding school violence. This lack of studies hinders our understanding of successful approaches for fostering safe and healthy school environments, and also limits our insight into the long-term impact of such interventions on students' social-emotional development.

Therefore, it is crucial to invest in further research in this field to provide a solid foundation for guiding the implementation of effective policies and programs for the prevention of school violence. Only then will it be possible to ensure school environments that are conducive to the holistic development of students, promoting their well-being and academic success[13].

In the school environment, an effective strategy for preventing violence is the use of educational materials adapted to the local context, featuring accessible language, grounded in scientific evidence, and validated by the target audience. These educational materials serve as a "care technology," enhancing health and education interventions by fostering the empowerment of individuals to promote their own well-being through engaging, interactive approaches[14,15]. Thus, this study aims to describe the development of an educational resource in the form of a booklet on violence in the school environment, created by teachers and researchers, as well as its validation by the target audience.

## METHODS

This is a methodological study employing both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative component was participatory in nature, aiming to seek a collective solution to a specific problem situation, as it involves drawing upon human experience to develop material with educational goals[16]; the quantitative component involved the validation of this educational material by the target audience – in this case, adolescents.

The research was conducted at a state-run elementary and secondary school located in the municipality of São Mateus, in the northern part of the state of Espírito Santo, Brazil. This school was selected for convenience, given an existing partnership with a federal university in northern Espírito Santo, which has been carrying out teaching, research, and outreach projects at the institution since 2018. The school serves as a practical training site for the "Child and

Adolescent Health" course; during the first semester of 2022, teachers and students reported an increase in violence against children and adolescents.

An assessment was carried out using a semi-structured, self-administered instrument distributed to teachers from various subject areas. The results indicated that while most were familiar with the definition and types of violence, they struggled to identify potential victims or determine the appropriate procedures for handling cases involving children or adolescents who had experienced violence.

Subsequently, an extension course titled "School-Based Network Action in Ending Violence" was offered. Its goal was to train elementary school teachers by fostering knowledge about violence and reporting mechanisms, while providing a foundation for evidence-based intervention practices aligned with the guidelines established by major national child and adolescent protection agencies. In addition to the theoretical content, the final module of the course required teachers to develop an educational resource.

The school operates on a full-time schedule, which facilitates close contact between teachers and students, thereby enabling the identification of behaviors suggestive of violence. The school serves a total of 400 students: 125 in Elementary Education (grades 1–5) and 243 in Middle Education (grades 6–9). The school community opted to create an educational resource tailored for adolescents in grades 6 through 9.

The development of this educational material, which took place in the second semester of 2022, involved teachers who had been teaching at the school for at least one year, represented both genders, and had participated in the extension course. Those with less than one year of classroom teaching experience, as well as those who did not participate in the course, were excluded.

Initially, a workshop on the development of educational technologies was conducted based on the Creative and Sensible Method (CSM) and incorporating Creativity and Sensibility Dynamics (CSD). The CSM enables participants, through creativity and sensibility, to express their thoughts, actions, and concepts regarding the world and themselves by utilizing these CSD[17].

This form of research values the dialogues generated within the spaces created for group activities, a core component of the MCS (Methodology of Social Construction) and an alternative approach for exploring the subject under investigation. The DCS (Dynamic Construction of Knowledge) consists of five stages: the 1st stage involves individual and collective introductions, along with the presentation of a "debate-generating question" (DGQ); the 2nd stage consists of artistic production; the 3rd stage is the exhibition of these artistic works;

the 4th stage involves a group discussion based on the DGQ; and in the 5th stage, the researcher summarizes the themes and subthemes that emerged, which the group then validates[17].

To assist in selecting the educational material to be developed, the research team provided an overview of the types of educational technologies most frequently used in health education initiatives. Subsequently, the group was asked to address the following guiding questions: "*How should the topic of violence be approached in an educational material?*" and "*What elements should be included in this educational material?*" Sufficient stationery supplies were provided for the creation of artistic work, including sets of colored pencils, felt-tip pens, crayons, graphite pencils, A4 paper, and poster board. Additionally, magazines and images related to various aspects of violence were made available.

Following this, the researchers stepped back from the field to analyze the empirical material generated during the health education sessions, conduct a literature review to incorporate scientific content relevant to the topics to be covered in the educational material, and develop storyboards. These storyboards were then used to commission a company responsible for the artistic design of the educational material.

A literature review was conducted using the Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences Literature (LILACS) database and the Virtual Health Library (VHL). The Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS) used included "violence," "health education," and "children and adolescents," along with their corresponding Portuguese-language equivalents. Furthermore, information was gathered from the Brazilian Ministry of Health's "Surveillance of Accidents and Violence" website and the 2022 "Atlas of Violence" published by the Institute for Applied Economic Research (*Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada* – IPEA)[18].

Studies published between 2012 and 2022 – including systematic reviews, integrative reviews, and clinical guidelines – were selected in both English and Portuguese. The search process involved selecting works based on their titles in relation to the proposed topic, followed by a review of their abstracts, and finally, an examination of the full texts. Materials found on websites were read in their entirety. The resulting storyboards were then submitted to the company responsible for illustration and layout.

The analysis of the empirical material generated through the CSD (images and narratives) was conducted according to the method proposed by Bardin[19], consisting of three phases: a) pre-analysis; b) exploration of the material, including categorization or coding; and c) processing of results, inference, and interpretation.

The content and appearance validation of the educational material was carried out by students in grades 6 through 9. All nine classes across these grades were visited; the research was presented, and students were invited to participate.

Participation was confirmed through the signing of an Free and Informed Consent Form (FICF) by the students' parents and/or guardians, and an Informed Assent Form (IAF) by the adolescents themselves. A one-day deadline was set for the return of the FICF, duly signed by the parents or guardians.

Once the ICFs and IAFs were obtained, the students were taken to a classroom where the “Educational Material Validation Instrument” was administered. This instrument included preliminary information, such as name and age, and was divided into sections covering organization, writing style, appearance, and motivation.

The inclusion criteria for this stage of the research were: being between 10 and 19 years of age and submitting an FICF signed by a parent and/or guardian. Data collection took place over a two-month period during the second half of 2023.

A quantitative approach was adopted for the validation phase of the study. The data were entered into an Excel 7.0 spreadsheet and organized into tables and charts. Subsequently, the data were analyzed using the Content Validity Index (CVI), which is calculated based on three mathematical equations: the S-CVI/Ave, representing the mean of the content validity indices for all items on the scale; the S-CVI/UA, which analyzes the proportion of items considered relevant; and the I-CVI, which evaluates the content validity of individual items[20].

Data with an agreement level greater than 0.80 for positive responses were considered valid. Items with an agreement index below 0.80 were deemed subject to revision or exclusion. The index was calculated by summing the instances of agreement for items marked “YES”[21].

The research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo, Centro Universitário do Norte do Espírito Santo (opinion number 4,871,092), in accordance with the provisions of Resolution No. 466 of December 12, 2012, issued by the National Health Council.

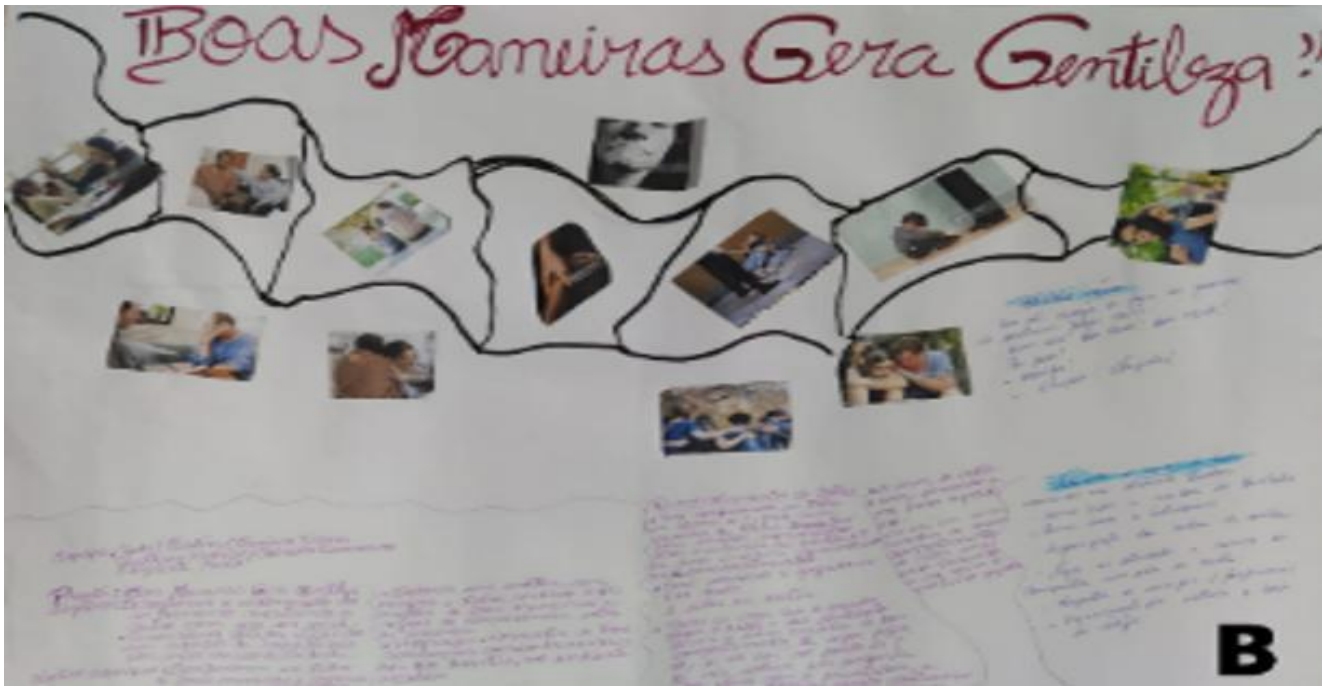
## RESULTS

Fifteen teachers out of a total of 16 professionals participated; of these, 13 (86.66%) were female, ranging in age from 30 to 56 years. Regarding religion, 12 (80%) identified as Catholic. In terms of educational background, 2 (13.33%) held an undergraduate degree, 12 (80%) had completed a specialization program, and 1 (6.67%) held a master’s degree. The participants had an average of 13 years of teaching experience, with an average of 5 years spent

at the school under study – a duration that suggests a solid understanding of the social reality experienced by their students.

During the workshop, the teachers created their own artistic pieces (Figure 1) and, following a group discussion, developed an educational resource: a booklet on appropriate behavior within the school environment, focusing on good manners. The booklet included suggestions for behaviors that foster harmonious coexistence, such as offering greetings like "Good morning" or "Good afternoon," or politely asking, "How was your day?" It also addressed practical matters, such as the proper use of restrooms – including flushing after use and avoiding the disposal of paper or trash on the floor. According to the teachers, these guidelines were intended to encourage the adoption of healthy habits among students, while promoting respect and kindness in their daily school life.

**Figure 1**. Artistic work created by teachers during a workshop on the production of educational technologies. São Mateus, Espírito Santo, Brazil, 2022.




Using the information gathered during the workshop, the group of researchers developed storyboards (Figure 2). Following these steps, the storyboards were sent to a firm contracted for layout and final production. In this way, teachers and researchers produced a 31-page booklet titled “Peaceful Coexistence Patrol: Good Manners Create Kindness” (Figure 3), which is available to the public free of charge via a QR code or the following link: http://repositorio.ufes.br/handle/10/19205. This collaborative development process between teachers and researchers facilitated the use of simplified language tailored to the local

context of the target audience; throughout the booklet, the illustrations, scenarios, and dialogue were designed to reflect the students' own daily realities as closely as possible. The booklet aims to promote positive practices within the school environment and in everyday life, fostering a more harmonious and secure setting for students.

**Figure 2**. Storyboard developed by the researchers. Cover (A) and presentation (B). São Mateus, Espírito Santo, Brazil, 2023.

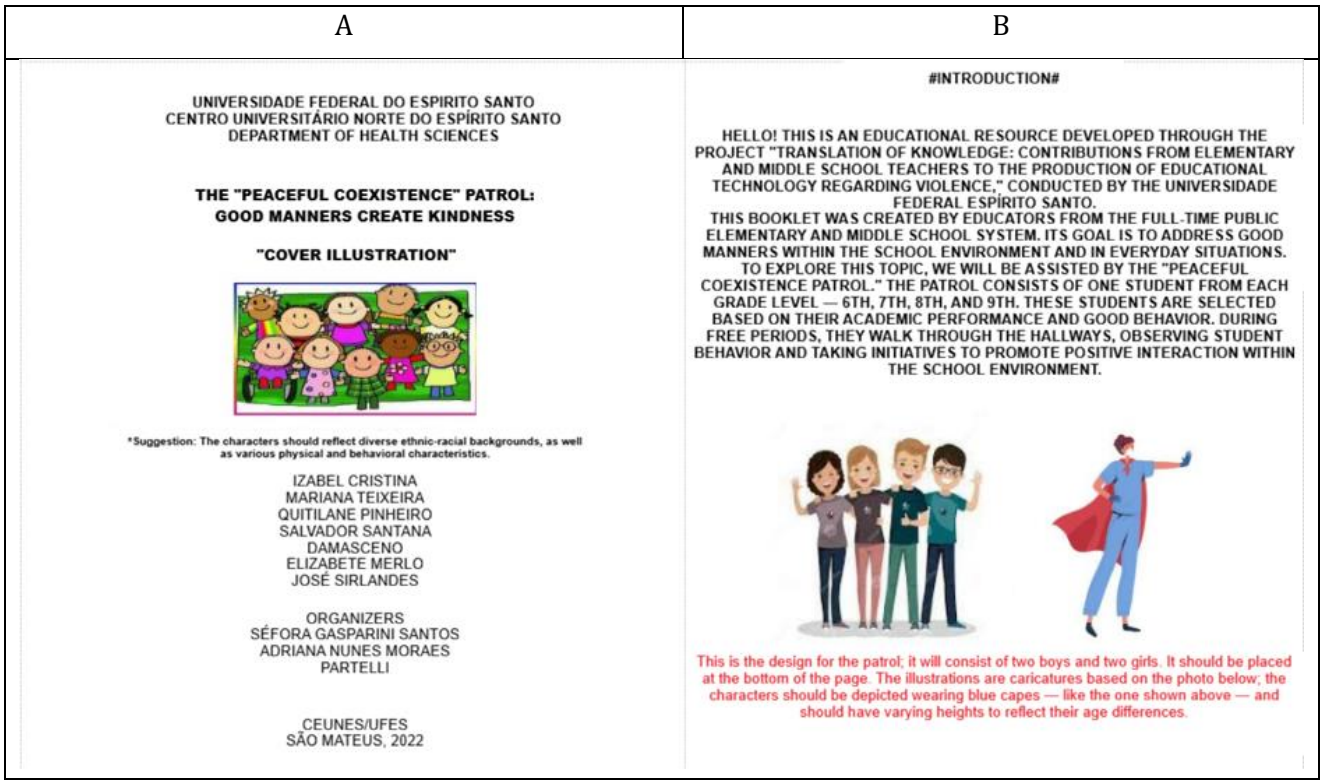
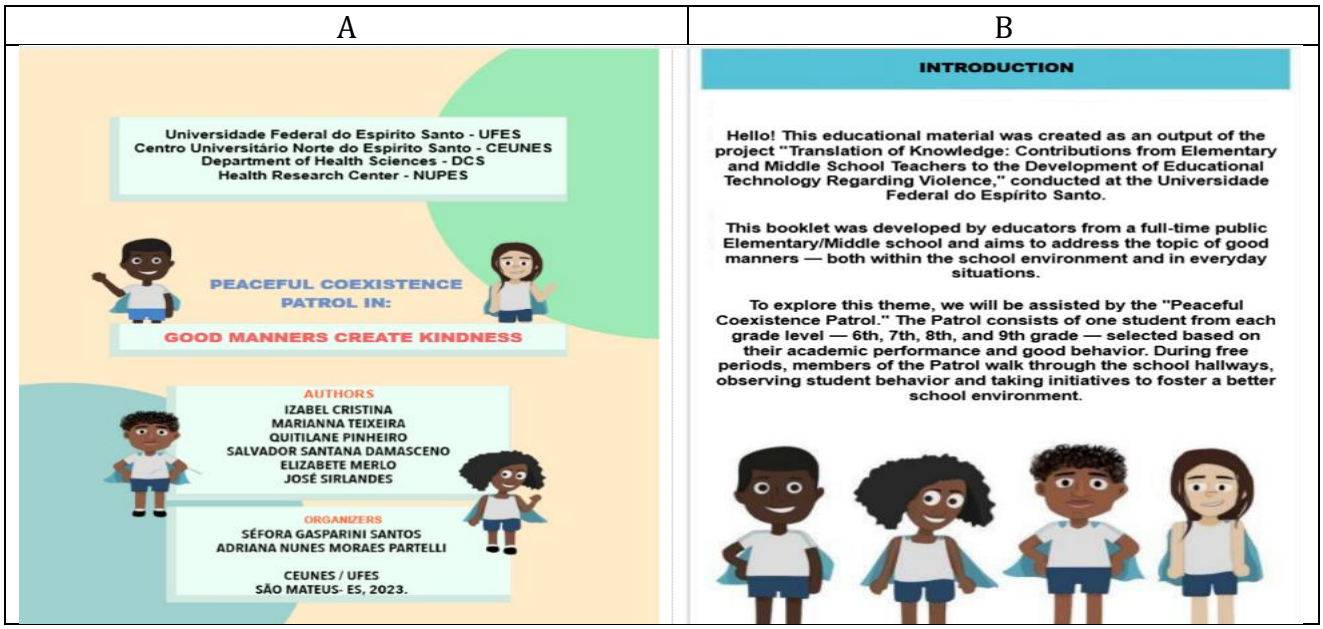



**Figure 3.** Final version of the booklet "Peaceful Coexistence Patrol: Good Manners Create Kindness." Cover (A) and introduction (B). São Mateus, ES, Brazil, 2023.



A total of 83 (100%) adolescents from middle school participated in the validation of the educational material; of these, 59 (71%) were female and 24 (29%) were male. Regarding age, 7 (8.43%) were 11 years old, 42 (50.60%) were 12, 18 (21.68%) were 13, 12 (14.45%) were 14, 3 (3.64%) were 15, and 1 (1.20%) was 16 years old.

The "Educational Material Validation Instrument," adapted specifically for this research, was used. The instrument collected initial information, such as the participants' names and ages, and was structured into sections evaluating the material's organization, writing style, appearance, and ability to motivate.

The data revealed a positive reception of the educational material. The organization was rated favorably; however, the sub-item "Did the cover catch your attention?" – within the "organization" category – received a Content Validity Index (CVI) of 0.50, indicating that the target audience felt a need for modification. The writing style was considered clear and engaging, with a CVI of 0.87. The illustrations contributed positively to the visual presentation, achieving a high score of 0.98. Furthermore, the material motivated the participants and prompted reflection, as indicated by a CVI of 0.89. The overall CVI was 0.89, confirming the material's effectiveness in achieving its educational purpose, as shown in the data presented in Table 1.

The organization of the material received a favorable assessment, although the sub-item "Did the cover catch your attention?" yielded a value below the expected threshold (0.50), signaling a need for modification according to the target audience's perception. However, given that this was the only sub-item with a score below the established validity standards (CVI ≥ 0.80), and considering the high ratings obtained for the other aspects evaluated, it was decided to keep the sub-item unchanged. This decision is supported by the fact that the mean Content Validity Index (CVI) for all items within the "Organization" scale reached 0.82, with an overall CVI of 0.89. Furthermore, the team determined that all illustrations in the material – including the characters featured on the cover – are consistent throughout the content and align well with the situations presented; these elements also received high scores from the evaluators. In addition, the high costs associated with hiring a graphic designer did not justify the change (Table 1).

**Table 1**. Content Validity Index score for the booklet, based on the target audience's assessment. São Mateus, ES, Brazil, 2023.

| Evaluation Items | n (n=83) | CVI |
|---|---|---|
| ***Organization*** | | **0.82** |
| 1. Did the cover catch your attention | 42 | 0.50 |
| 2. Does it indicate the subject it refers to? | 80 | 0.96 |
| 3. Do the topics follow a sequence? | 77 | 0.92 |
| 4. Is the amount of contents in the topics appropriate? | 78 | 0.93 |
| **Writing Style** | | **0.87** |
| 5. Regarding the understandability of the sentences, they are: | 77 | 0.92 |
| 6. Is there a connection between the questions and the sentences? | 78 | 0.93 |
| 7. The written content is: | 71 | 0.85 |
| 8. The text is: | 67 | 0.80 |
| **Appearance** | | **0.98** |
| 9. The illustrations are: | 82 | 0.98 |
| 10. The illustrations | 82 | 0.98 |
| **Motivation** | | **0.89** |
| 11. In your opinion, would anyone who reads this material understand what it is about? | 73 | 0.87 |
| 12. Did it motivate you to read until the end? | 75 | 0.90 |
| 13. Did the material prompt you to think about or take action regarding your health? | 76 | 0.91 |
| **Global CVI** | | **0.89** |

**Key:** N = number of adolescents who rated the item as "yes," "clear," "interesting," "simple," "helps with a better understanding of the text," and "easy to understand"; CVI = Content Validity Index.

## DISCUSSION

This study addresses the creation of a 31-page booklet titled "Peaceful Coexistence Patrol: Good Manners Create Kindness," developed by teachers and researchers and validated by its target audience – adolescents. The booklet was produced based on the social realities and experiences of teachers regarding a critical issue that must be addressed in schools: violence.

Creating material rooted in the exchange of experiences, with the active participation of teachers, serves to give a voice to those the material aims to reach: the students and the broader school community. This approach aligns with the global guidelines set forth in the international manual *School-based Violence Prevention: A Practical Handbook*, developed by the WHO in partnership with UNESCO and UNICEF. The international document emphasizes that effective violence prevention occurs when pedagogical tools are integrated into the school routine through direct interaction among educators, students, and the community[22].

The material was produced in a participatory, enjoyable, educational, dialogical, and enlightening manner, addressing the sensitive issue of violence – and ways to prevent it – by fostering good manners and peaceful coexistence within the school environment. Research has emphasized that the active participation of the community in decision-making processes generates diverse forms of knowledge, ultimately leading to social transformation[16,23].

Recent research reveals a growing concern regarding violence in school environments in Brazil. According to the 2024 Violence Atlas, there has been a 50% increase in incidents of school-based violence, with more than 1,200 cases currently under investigation. This

significant rise has caused fears about safety within schools to surpass concerns regarding violence in public spaces, such as on the streets. Between January and September 2024, 9,530 alerts concerning violence in school settings were recorded – a figure substantially higher than the 6,300 cases documented in previous years[24].

Based on the data collected during the validation phase of the research, it is observed that the study sample consisted predominantly of adolescents aged 11 to 14, with a smaller representation of those aged 15 and 16. Furthermore, there was a higher number of female participants compared to males. This indicates that the educational material was evaluated by a diverse sample of adolescents, offering a comprehensive perspective on the effectiveness and relevance of the booklet – a factor that should be taken into account when analyzing the results and adapting the material to address the varying needs and contexts of the target audience.

In the context of health education, the active participation of adolescents was essential for fostering a critical, creative, and liberating approach. In his work, Paulo Freire emphasizes that "there is no such thing as knowing more or knowing less: there are simply different kinds of knowledge." Incorporating the narratives and experiences of adolescents into the validation of the booklet ensures that the resources are authentic, relevant, and effective. This not only enriches the educational process – making it more meaningful and impactful – but also reinforces the importance of a target-audience-centered approach, ensuring that the needs and perspectives of the adolescents are fully addressed[25].

By giving adolescents a voice and involving them in the evaluation process of educational material intended for their own use, their autonomy was strengthened, and they were empowered to become active agents in the promotion of health and well-being. This approach, rooted in the ideals of Paulo Freire, highlights the importance of an education that transcends the mere transmission of knowledge, aiming instead for social transformation and the holistic development of young people. Such a perspective aligns with the latest global strategies from the WHO, which advocate for the active participation of children and adolescents in the co-creation of health policies and resources as a cornerstone of contemporary well-being[26,27].

## CONCLUSION

A handbook was produced by teachers and researchers – and validated by the target audience – with the potential to serve as a strategy for preventing violence in the school environment. School violence is a complex, multifaceted problem that requires integrated and collaborative approaches between the education and health sectors.

This handbook can be a valuable tool for promoting a culture of peace and respectful coexistence within schools. However, the research also highlighted the need for further study into the effectiveness of prevention and intervention strategies regarding school violence. Only with a solid evidence base will it be possible to develop and implement effective policies that ensure school environments are safe and conducive to the holistic development of students.

A limitation of this study is that the educational material was not validated by external judges or subject-matter experts. Nevertheless, its primary contribution lies in the collaboration between teachers, researchers, and the young people themselves to create an educational tool tailored to the actual needs of the population. This process underscores the importance of the active participation of all stakeholders involved in social transformation. Furthermore, the findings cannot be generalized beyond the specific context studied, as the educational material was developed to address the realities of the local school community. Even so, the results obtained can serve as a reference and pave the way for future research.

Therefore, it is recommended that research in this field continue, and that programs such as the PSE – which integrates education and health to improve students' quality of life— be expanded. The active participation of adolescents in the development and validation of educational materials should be encouraged, focusing on an educational approach that is truly transformative and capable of contributing to the construction of a fairer and safer society.

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**Associated Publisher**: Rafael Gomes Ditterich

**Conflict of Interests:** the authors declared there is no conflict of interests

**Financing**: none

**Contributions**:
Concept – Benicá ACS, Moraes-Partelli AN
Investigation– Benicá ACS
Writing – first draft – Benicá ACS, Coelho MP, Moraes-Partelli AN
Writing – revision and editing – Benicá ACS, Coelho MP, Moraes-Partelli AN

**How to cite this article (Vancouver)**
Benincá ACS, Coelho MP, Moraes-Partelli NA. Participatory development and validation by the target audience of a booklet on violence. Rev Fam, Ciclos Vida Saúde Contexto Soc. [Internet]. 2026 [*cited in* insert day, month and year of access]; 14:e026021. DOI: https://doi.org/10.18554/refacs.v14i00.9095

**How to cite this article (ABNT)**
BENINCÁ, A. C. S.; COELHO, M. P.; MORAES-PARTELLI, A. N. Participatory development and validation by the target audience of a booklet on violence. **Revista Família, Ciclos de Vida e Saúde no Contexto Social**, Uberaba, MG, v. 14, e026021, 2026. DOI: https://doi.org/10.18554/refacs.v14i00.9095. Access in: *insert day, month and year of access*.

**How to cite this article (APA)**
Benincá, A. C. S., Coelho, M. P., & Moraes-Partelli, A. N. (2026). Participatory development and validation by the target audience of a booklet on violence. Rev. Fam., Ciclos Vida Saúde Contexto Soc., 14, e026021. Retrieved in *insert day, month and year of access* from https://doi.org/10.18554/refacs.v14i00.9095

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