



RESCUR

SURFING THE WAVES

A RESILIENCE CURRICULUM FOR EARLY YEARS AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS

A Teacher's Guide

REVISED EDITION



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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background

Many school children today are experiencing unprecedented social and economic challenges as well as traumatic experiences related to poverty, conflict, forced displacement, migration, human trafficking, abuse and neglect, adverse family circumstances, urbanisation, climate change and natural disasters, amongst others. Children growing up in such adverse and challenging circumstances are prone to learning difficulties, absenteeism and early school leaving, mental health difficulties, and social inequity, discrimination and social exclusion. There is an increasing incidence of mental health difficulties in children and young people, with 20% experiencing mental health difficulties during the school years and half of mental health difficulties starting before the age of 14 (Baranne, & Falissard, 2018; WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2018). Twenty percent of 11-17 year olds in Europe reported growing up unhappy and anxious about the future as a result of bullying, academic pressure and loneliness (UNICEF/European Union, 2021). Vulnerable and marginalized children, such as those living in poverty, with mental health issues, with individual educational needs and disability, and those exposed to domestic violence and abuse, were the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic (Singh et al, 2020; UNESCO, 2020).

These challenges emphasise the need for resilience-enhancing systems, such as the home, the school, the community and the peer group, to protect children at risk in their development. Research has consistently underlined the effectiveness of educational practices which help to protect and promote the healthy development and resilience of children at risk in their development and education, thus serving as a leverage for social inclusion and equity (OECD, 2018, Ungar, 2021). Education is one of the primary systems which can help to break the cycle of deprivation, disadvantage and inequity by promoting the resilience and social and emotional competence of disadvantaged children, setting them up to success rather than failure. Schools and other educational institutions have access to all or most of the children and young people for a considerable time of the day during a critical period when their personality and social-emotional competences are still developing. They can provide children and young people at risk with the tools and contexts they need to grow and thrive academically, emotionally and socially. A nurturing and safe learning environment characterized by caring relationships, sense of belonging, and active engagement in learning, reduces the stress of discrimination and exclusion and provides a safe and empowering base which facilitates children's learning and social emotional development (Gartland, et al, 2019; Twum-Antwi et al, 2019; Ungar, 2018).

The identification of protective processes have led to the development of various school-based interventions which seek to nurture the resilience of children and young people facing adversity. The curriculum for learners coming from challenged and deprived environments, also needs to address the challenges and obstacles likely to be faced by such learners, and to build their psychological resources not only to survive in adverse circumstances, but to continue growing and thriving. These resources include a sense of optimism and hope in the future, a positive attitude, adaptability and flexibility, problem solving skills, determination and perseverance, sense of agency and belief in bringing about

positive change, sense of coherence and purpose, high academic expectations, and building and maintaining healthy relationships with peers and adults (Fritz et al, 2018; Gartland et al, 2019; Meng et al, 2018; Twum-Antwi et al, 2019; Ungar, 2018).

Rutter (2015) argues that resilience is not a quality that can be taught since it is an interactive process that can only be identified as a response to adversity. He agrees, however, that children may be provided with experiential learning opportunities which provide them with the competencies that make them better prepared to face adversity and to function optimally despite challenges. Having the tools to deal effectively with manageable stressors strengthens the children's resolve and ability to overcome adversity and keep thriving, a process Rutter (2015) calls 'steeling'.

Various reviews of studies reported that the integration of social and emotional and resilience competences in the curriculum is particularly effective for vulnerable and marginalized students, who may have a more pressing need to develop such competences to address the challenges in their lives (e.g. Clarke et al, 2015; Durlak et al, 2011; Farahmand et al, 2011; Sanchez et al, 2018; Weare and Nind, 2011). In their review of resilience programs, Hart and Heaver (2013) found that teaching relationship building and problem-solving at school as well as a close relationship with one adult communicating care, support, and high expectations, are particularly effective in improving the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people considered at risk.

Objectives

RESCUR Surfing The Waves has been developed in response to the social, cultural and economic challenges faced by many children today. It presents a resilience curriculum for early years and primary schools to foster the academic, emotional and social learning of school children who may be at risk of early school leaving, absenteeism, school failure, social exclusion and mental health problems amongst others. It provides them with the key tools to overcome the disadvantages and obstacles in their development whilst making use of their strengths to keep thriving. Equipping children with the requisite skills to overcome and deal effectively with challenges related to poverty, unemployment, mobility, forced displacement, family stress, discrimination, violence and exclusion on the basis of gender, ethnicity or minority status, disability, culture, faith or belief, as well as traumatic events and major life changes such as pandemics and climate change, is an investment in building a generation of resilient citizens for the coming generations. The curriculum seeks to provide opportunities for children at risk in their development and education to engage successfully in the educational and social activities in school, enjoy a sense of belonging, and leave school with the required competences for further education and career development.

More specifically, the curriculum has the following objectives:

- › To develop and enhance children's social and emotional learning and resilience competences
- › To promote children's positive and prosocial behaviour and healthy relationships
- › To promote children's mental health and wellbeing, particularly those at risk of mental health issues
- › To improve children's academic engagement, motivation and learning

The thrust of *RESCUR Surfing the Waves* curriculum is to equip young children with the skills they need to manage the ‘tests of life’ and overcome any obstacles they face on the way. This does not detract however, from the responsibility of society to take active steps to prevent and eliminate adversity and disadvantage, such as poverty, wars, crime, social exclusion and marginalization. It is far easier for the individual to make healthy choices and grow healthily and successfully in healthy contexts. Children provided with protective contexts, including caring and nurturing adults, are more effective in coping with adversity and in thriving academically and socially (Watson et al, 2012; Werner and Smith, 1992; Ungar, 2021). In line with the research evidence on resilience, we believe in a systemic, whole school approach to resilience, focusing on both the creation of healthy and protective contexts as well as equipping the individual himself/herself to overcome adversity (Cefai, 2020; Masten, 2011). Furthermore the teaching of resilience impacts the teachers’ overall practice and leads to a paradigm shift in teaching and learning, with resilience education becoming embedded within the whole classroom and school climate (Beltman, 2020; Jennings & Greenberg, 2017). This curriculum aims to bring multiple changes in the whole school culture, and Chapter 4 describes how school staff may create resilience-enhancing classroom and whole school contexts.

Target audience

RESCUR Surfing the Waves presents a universal resilience curriculum for early and primary schools in Europe for 4-12 year old learners. It particularly targets disadvantaged and marginalized children such as children coming from ethnic minorities and from a migrant and refugee background, children from socio-economic disadvantaged families and communities, children with individual educational needs and disability and children who experienced trauma. The curriculum however, has been developed as a universal, inclusive programme for all children in the classroom, and it is envisaged that it will be delivered by the classroom teachers as a key area in the general curriculum, delivered on a regular basis like other content areas such as literacy, numeracy, science and creativity.

BOX 1 *RESCUR Project*

RESCUR: A Resilience Curriculum for Early Years and Elementary Schools in Europe was a three year (2012-2015) LLP Comenius project coordinated by the University of Malta (Malta) with the participation of the University of Zagreb (Croatia), the University of Crete (Greece), University of Pavia (Italy), the University of Lisbon (Portugal), and Örebro University (Sweden). The project developed a resilience curriculum for early and primary education through the intercultural and transnational collaboration among the partner institutions. The curriculum was developed on the basis of the current social, economic and technological needs and challenges of the partners involved, and seeks to develop in learners the requisite competences needed to overcome such challenges in their lives to achieve academic success and social and emotional wellbeing as young citizens. In the first year the partners developed the curriculum, consisting of six major themes, namely effective communication, healthy relationships, a growth mindset, self-determination, developing one’s strengths in learning and social activities, and overcoming and dealing with challenges and obstacles, such as bullying, loss, failure and rejection. In the second year the curriculum was piloted in a number of schools in each partner country. In the third year the curriculum was edited and finalised and consequently published in three manuals for teachers (early years, early primary and late primary) and one manual for parents in the seven languages of the consortium, namely Croatian, English, Greek, Italian, Maltese, Portuguese and Swedish.

Structure

The programme consists of five manuals as follows:



Teachers' Guide

This is a practical guide for teachers on how to implement the curriculum in the classroom. It describes the objectives, theoretical framework and structure of the curriculum, the main themes covered, pedagogy, assessment, and issues of implementation and evaluation. It includes also chapters on the creation of classroom and whole school climates which consolidate and reinforce the taught aspect of the curriculum, as well as a chapter on developing the school staff's own resilience and wellbeing.

Activities Manuals

These present the classroom activities for each of the seven curriculum themes at various levels. The first four themes have two subthemes each, with each subtheme having 3 topics, themes 5 and 6 have 3 topics each, and theme 7 has 8 topics.

- ① **Developing communication skills**
 - a. effective communication
 - b. assertiveness
- ② **Establishing and maintaining healthy relationships**
 - a. healthy relationships
 - b. cooperative skills, empathy and moral reasoning
- ③ **Developing a growth mindset**
 - a. positive and optimistic thinking
 - b. positive emotions
- ④ **Developing self determination**
 - a. problem solving
 - b. empowerment and autonomy
- ⑤ **Building on strengths: developing a positive self concept and self esteem**
- ⑥ **Developing self-regulation (motivation and attention, managing anger and anxiety)**
- ⑦ **Turning challenges into opportunities**
 - a. dealing with challenges and adversity
 - b. dealing with sickness and disability
 - c. dealing with prejudice and discrimination
 - d. dealing with rejection
 - e. dealing with family conflict
 - f. dealing with loss
 - g. dealing with bullying
 - h. dealing with change and transition

These seven themes occur in the three manuals of activities, from basic activities in the early years to more complex activities in the early primary and late primary years. Each of the two subthemes in the first four subthemes consists of three topics and each topic includes two activities at basic and advanced levels respectively. Themes 5 and 6 have three topics each, while Theme 7 consists of eight topics. Activities include a mindfulness exercise, storytelling and discussion, practical activities and take home activities.

Special features of the activities include:

- ▶ story-telling to introduce the topic: in the early years and early primary school, the stories are based on two specially designed mascots, namely the unusually coloured, bespectacled Sherlock the Squirrel, and the broken spikes Zelda the Hedgehog. In the late primary school years, the stories make use of human figures and real life resilience stories and fables;
- ▶ mindfulness: each activity starts with a short mindfulness activity chosen from the mindfulness activities included on the soft version of the curriculum, or designed by the classroom teacher herself;
- ▶ practical, multisensory activities such as drawing, drama and play to complement the story telling;
- ▶ a learner portfolio where learners collect their drawings, worksheets and other written tasks into a developing resilience portfolio;
- ▶ take home activities, including worksheets, where parents and learners are encouraged to continue discussing and practising the skills learnt in the classroom;
- ▶ teacher- and self-assessment checklists for every theme.

The curriculum package includes also the following features:

- ▶ Finger puppets Sherlock and Zelda the two mascots used in the stories in the early years and early primary school (Appendix.4); teachers are strongly encouraged to make a cloth puppet of Sherlock and Zelda as well;
- ▶ Story books with pictures for the early years and early primary activities
- ▶ Cards of the story animals in the early years and early primary school activities (soft version);
- ▶ Resources to be used in the activities, including pictures, diagrams and finger puppets, learner worksheets and parents worksheets (soft version);
- ▶ Set of mindfulness activities as well as music composed specifically for the curriculum which may be used during the activities (soft version);
- ▶ Teacher assessment checklists and self-assessment checklists (primary level) on each of the six themes to be completed by the teachers and the learners at the end of the theme;
- ▶ Learner portfolio to be built by the learners with the teachers during the classroom activities and the parents during the home activities;
- ▶ Posters of the slogan adopted for each of the theme.

Story books

The Adventures of Sherlock and Zelda contains the stories found in the Early Years activities, while *More Adventures of Sherlock and Zelda* includes the stories in the Early Primary Activities. Each story is accompanied by a drawing illustrating that story. It is recommended that the teacher reads the story to the learners from the story books and then asks the questions found in the respective manuals of activities.

Parents' Guide

The activities are accompanied by a parents' guide which complements and reinforces the work being done in the classroom. The guide introduces the parents to the curriculum and the respective themes, subthemes, topics and activities, and describes what parents can do to help their children continue developing the resilience skills learnt at school. After introducing the curriculum and defining resilience, the manual explains each theme and subtheme, and suggests a number of strategies parents may utilise to help their children to master the resilience skills learnt at school and apply them in different contexts such as home and the community.

Editions of the curriculum package

Besides this English language international edition, the curriculum has been published in six other editions, namely in Croatian, Greek, Italian, Maltese, Portuguese and Swedish. The curriculum is also published in an electronic version. More recently it has also been translated in Czech, Lithuanian, Romanian, Russian and Turkish.

Conclusion

The following chapters describe in more detail the curriculum and how it may be implemented in the classroom. Chapter 2 starts with an introduction to the resilience perspective in education, followed by an explanation of the curriculum framework, including the rationale for the seven themes. Chapter 3 describes how the curriculum may be delivered in the classroom, including a universal, inclusive framework, structure of activities, the SAFE approach to teaching, storytelling, mindfulness, use of resources, assessment, the learners' portfolio, and the parents' role and contribution amongst others. Chapter 4 describes how the curriculum may be implemented through a whole school approach, illustrating how the classroom and school climates may serve to promote resilience. Chapter 5 underlines the importance of the teachers' own resilience and wellbeing, and presents various strategies on how classroom teachers may develop resilience in their work. Chapter 6 discusses key issues school staff need to keep in mind when implementing the curriculum, including administrative support and guidance, planning, staff and parents' education, completing an implementation index, monitoring and evaluation.

“

We, as the adults in children's lives, can't keep telling our children countless times to "calm down" or "pay attention" without providing them with some practical guidelines for how to do so. Teaching these practices to students can increase not only their social and emotional skills, but their resilience: the capacity to not only cope, but thrive in the face of adversity.

(Lantieri 2009, p. 10)

”

The curriculum has been piloted with more than 200 early years and primary school teachers in about 80 schools across the 6 partner countries. Here is what some of the teachers said about the curriculum (Cefai et al, 2015):

It became significantly easier for me to realize that I am part of the ecology of the classroom and my behavior affects children in a significant way. I needed to change and the change of the program started with me.

I learned a lot from my students while implementing the program...I realized how much emphasis children give to their friends in order to gain strength and overcome obstacles.

As soon as I had made it “my own”, it (the program) worked. Often, the lessons went down very well.

Fun and exciting. Interesting to see how the students “grew”.

Most of the students were very active and engaged. They liked the lessons. Great interest in talking about themselves. It got better as we went along. I liked most the child perspective. Very good foundation in values. Children need this kind of education.

There is not a golden recipe to build resilience in children, but I am sure that this curriculum is a very good way to do so.

At first I was a bit sceptical that the children will not understand...words like ‘beliefs’ and ‘consequences’, but they understood quite fast.

Week after week the children came expecting to continue where Zelda and Sherlock left off!

We are all the time working against time, like “road runners”, without time to talk to the students.

So if we have more time to dedicate to this program, it would be beautiful.

The mindfulness activities were a surprise, the children loved them and I could note a positive difference after a few weeks.

All the take home activities were done, very uncommon.

The curriculum has been piloted with about 3000 students in about 80 schools in the six partner countries of the project. Here is what some of learners said about the curriculum (Cefai et al, 2015):

I learned to put myself in someone else’s shoes, to be useful and help others.

We learned how to ask for help and support from our friends, teachers and family. I learned that all obstacles and adversity can become an opportunity.

I learned how to behave in a calm manner without anger toward others. I liked this program because we learned how to think in a positive way.

We need to apply what we learned from the project both at school and home.

We talked about issues that matter to us and we had a chance to discuss them openly.

I liked that we worked together with the activities and learned together about being strong. We are the children who never give up.

If you’re a pessimist, then good things will not happen. If you’re an optimist, you are more likely to see good things around you.

We learned that it’s important to help each other because then everything is easier and nicer.

Since its publication in 2015, RESCUR Surfing the Waves, has been implemented in schools and educational centres across the world, including Australia, Croatia, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Sweden, Turkey and Uganda. Various evaluations have also been carried out with positive results:

- ▶ An evaluation of the early years' programme was carried out in five kindergarten centers in Malta over a one-year period (Cefai et al, 2018). A pre--post -intervention study in 20 classrooms with about 100 young children (4-5 year old) showed an improvement in resilience skills, prosocial behavior, and learning engagement. However, the control groups dropped out of the study.
- ▶ Another pre-post evaluation of the early years' programme was carried out with 173 young children (3-7 year old) in Croatia over a three month period (Milković, 2017). The study reported an improvement in children's resilience skills and behavior amongst both children considered at risk as well as children coming from more favorable backgrounds
- ▶ A larger scale study by Simoes et al. (2020) in Portugal was carried out with 1692 children aged 3 to 17 years old. The evaluation consisted of a one full-year implementation group consisting of 720 children, and a waiting group of 429 children (53.2% males, 50.8% in primary school and 29% in pre-school). The authors reported significant differences between groups at post intervention according to teachers' evaluations, with lower levels of difficulties and higher level of prosocial behavior for the RESCUR group. Qualitative data from the teachers suggested that the teachers perceived a decrease in disruptive behavior and an increase in prosocial behavior, as well as in children's autonomy and competence to solve problems
- ▶ A pilot study of the theme on Relationships was carried out in 35 classes from kindergarten through secondary schools (first level) in Italy, involving a total of 738 pupils and making use of teacher-completed classroom observation questionnaires, focus groups, teacher reflective diaries and teacher interviews (Cavioni et al., 2017). The authors reported that feedback from the teachers clearly indicated that the program enhanced students' sharing, cooperation and teamwork skills. Carelli, Lizzori and Zanetti (2020) carried out a small scale study in Italy making use of pre and post research design with 154 primary school students aged between 7 to 11 years attending 9 classes (5 experimental and 4 control). The authors reported a higher level of resilience skills and of prosocial behavior amongst the experimental group participants according to both teachers' and parents' evaluations.
- ▶ In a randomized controlled trial with around 1000 children aged 7 to 12 years old in Sweden, reported that the curriculum can be scaled-out to social services with its implementation outcomes retained (Lilja et al, 2021).
- ▶ In a study with 100 parents of primary school children in Greece, Matsopoulos et al (2020) reported that the majority of participants reported an increase in their children's social and emotional competence. They also found a relationship between the perceived usefulness of the program for the parents and positive family climate.

CHAPTER 2

Curriculum Framework

The resilience perspective has shifted the focus from deficit and disadvantage to growth and health in human development. Through the study of individuals who managed to thrive and succeed despite the negative circumstances in their lives, it has led to a reconsideration of the ways in which we can foster success and healthy development in children and young people even in the face of risk or vulnerability. Resilience may be defined as successful adaptation, such as academic achievement, healthy relationships, and wellbeing, and the absence of mental health issues, in the face of adversity, such as such as poverty, homelessness, and family instability and conflict (Masten, 2011). It is about supporting children to build their coping skills and adaptive capacities and develop healthy supportive relationships (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2015). It is not only about surviving and coping but also about thriving and growing in the face of risk or disadvantage. Rather than an extraordinary process, or a trait a child is born with, resilience is “more about ordinary responses which focus on strengths” (Masten, 2001, p.228), the result of the dynamic interaction between the internal assets of the individual and contextual factors. The systems impinging on the child’s life, such as the family, the peer group and the school, have thus a crucial and determining role in directing the child’s physical, social, emotional and cognitive development towards healthy trajectories even in the face of risk (Pianta & Walsh, 1998; Masten, 2011; Ungar, 2012, 2021). Resilience building can start at young age when the child’s brain and personality are still developing (Diamond & Lee, 2011; Masten 2018).

Education provides a unique opportunity to promote the inclusion of marginalised communities, empowering the individual to take responsibility for their own life, thus serving as a catalyst for equity, social justice and social inclusion (Freire, 1972). This resilience curriculum aims to equip vulnerable and marginalized children, with the essential resources to overcome the disadvantages and obstacles in their development, such as poverty, family stress, mobility, forced displacement, bullying, violence, discrimination and social exclusion. It seeks to build and strengthen their cognitive, social and emotional competence, empowering them to make use of their strengths not only to overcome challenges but to grow and thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

Curriculum framework principles

The resilience curriculum is underpinned by a theoretical framework developed from the literature on evidence based practices in resilience education. The framework posits a dual ‘taught and caught’ perspective and focuses both on outcomes and processes (Figure 1). This chapter focuses on the ‘taught’ aspect, describing how the curriculum may be delivered in the classroom as a key content area of the mainstream curriculum; Chapter 4 discusses how the classroom and the whole school may be organised to promote and enhance student resilience.

The curriculum is responsive to the needs of individual learner differences, underlining the right of all learners for a quality education, and a commitment towards social justice with awareness of the risks of discriminatory practices due to individual differences. Whilst it reflects the strengths and needs

of European society, it also takes cognizance of, and addresses, European diversity, with activities addressing cultural differences across Europe. The curriculum, however, is flexible and reflexive, and may be adapted according to the cultures of the regions and countries where it is being implemented. Adaptations, however, need to take place without compromising its integrity (see Chapter 6).

The curriculum is presented as an inclusive, universal, preventive programme targeting all learners in the classroom, but with activities reflecting the diversity of learners, particularly vulnerable and marginalized children. A universal approach focusing on the whole classroom avoids the potential risks of labelling and stigmatisation resulting from targeting the difficulties of individual learners, while at the same time addressing their needs within an inclusive, non-segregating perspective, focusing also on their strengths (It must be mentioned that not all children coming from such backgrounds experience academic or social and emotional difficulties and many are able to overcome the odds and achieve successful and well-adjusted lives). In this way the whole school community becomes actively involved in the curriculum's promotion and application in daily school life. There is also less likelihood of vulnerable and marginalized children missing other curricular activities in order to attend targeted resilience sessions.

The curriculum seeks to promote the positive development and active citizenship of vulnerable and marginalized learners by fostering both their internal and external resources, such as self-awareness, problem solving, optimism, adaptability, perseverance, self-efficacy, sense of purpose, self-regulation, empathy, collaboration, relationship building, and overcoming challenges ((Cefai, 2008; Gartland et al, 2019; Hart and Heaven, 2013; Twum-Antwi et al, 2019; Ungar et al, 2019). Each theme contains also a number of activities focused on addressing difference in relation to that topic, such as bullying, prejudice, discrimination, exclusion, lack of friends, language barriers, and learning difficulties. The stories in the activities reflect the challenges and difficulties of such children, while the questions and activities following the story encourage children to work out solutions to overcome such difficulties. Learners are also asked to reflect on their own challenges which are more related to their own context and reality. Furthermore they reflect on what they can do to help other children experiencing the difficulties illustrated in the story, so as to promote understanding, empathy, solidarity and helping others.

The taught component includes regular teaching of resilience education as a core competence by the classroom teacher, making use of direct teaching of evidence-informed and developmentally and culturally appropriate resilience competencies with application to real-life situations. It meets the key criteria for programme effectiveness through the provision of a set curriculum and available resources, including a teacher's guide to support consistency of delivery (Durlak et al., 2011). Programmes which are integrated in the mainstream curriculum and delivered by school teachers are more likely to be effective in terms of student outcomes in the long term than added, bolt-on activities delivered by outside experts (Durlak et al, 2011; Sklad et al, 2012).

The curriculum takes a spiral approach, building the key resilience competencies from one year to the other, with increasing complexity of behaviour and social contexts at each developmental level. A developmental approach strengthens and builds on basic skills and builds on what learners have already learned, equipping them with skills needed for different stages in their development (Denham, 2018). Teachers are also encouraged to embed the resilience competences being learnt in the other academic subjects so as to facilitate the generalization and internalization of the resilience competencies

(Aspen, 2017). Another effective strategy in curriculum development and implementation is working in partnership with the learners' parents, and the curriculum includes home activities, where the learners and parents work together on tasks related to the skills being learnt at school; parents are also provided with a manual of family activities (Downey & Williams, 2010; Goldberg et al., 2019).

The curriculum adopts a systemic whole school approach, focusing on both curricular and contextual processes, with suggestions on how the classroom climate and the whole school ecology as well as the family may support the resilience of the learners (Goldberg et al, 2019; Weare and Nind, 2011). Direct instruction of resilience competences such as problem solving, building relationships, self-regulation, positive thinking, and overcoming challenges, are complemented by the promotion of a classroom climate where children at risk feel connected, included, supported and have a sense of belonging. Through their practice, relationships and pedagogy, classroom teachers will be able to create safe, inclusive, caring and enabling classroom environment for all learners. Educators will also be trained on how school themselves as social systems, in collaboration with other systems such as families, the local community and support services, can operate as resilience enhancing contexts. The programme provides also training on how educators themselves may maintain their resilience, mental health and wellbeing, and how the school can also support the education and wellbeing of the parents.

Curriculum themes

The curriculum seeks to develop the positive development of vulnerable and marginalised children by fostering their psychological resources. It consists of seven major themes reflecting key resilience competences in children. The themes have been identified from a collaborative review of the existing international literature on resilience (eg.Hart and Heaver, 2013; National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2015; Porcelli et al., 2014; Rutter, 2015; Twum-Antwi et al., 2019; Ungar et al, 2019) as well as an analysis of the current socio- economic, educational, and cultural needs of children in the European context. The themes spiral at higher levels of complexity from the early years (4 years old +) to the early primary and later primary years (12 years old). The first four themes consist of two subthemes each, with each subtheme having 3 topics and set of activities. Themes 5 and 6 consist of three topics each while Theme 7 has eight topics.

Developing communication skills (We listen and we understand). Communication does not finish when we send a message and receive a response, but it leads towards learning how to communicate ideas effectively, including an understanding of what the participants in the conversation think, feel, and intend (Schulz von Thun, 2002). The development of effective interpersonal communication is possible in the balanced relation between the skills of listening to, and understanding others, and the skills of expressing and standing up for oneself. This theme thus takes a dual approach, first focusing on listening to and understanding others and then expressing and standing up for oneself. The first subtheme explores three topics, namely effective listening, understanding others, and communicating ideas effectively. The second theme subtheme consists of another three topics, namely, expressing feelings and needs, standing up for oneself, and assertive conflict resolution.

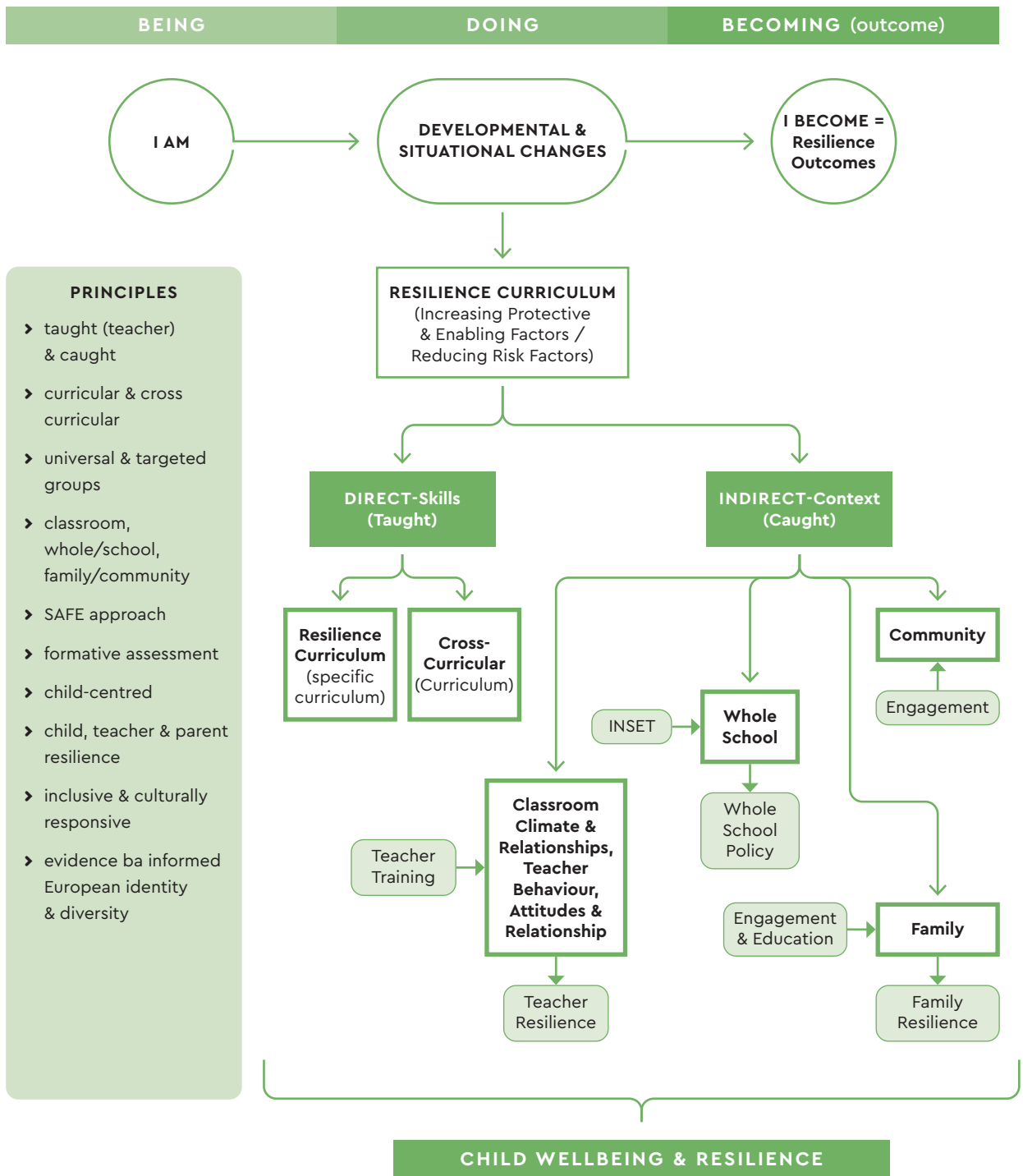


Figure 1: Curriculum Framework

Establishing and maintaining healthy relationships (We build strong relationships). Healthy relationships are a crucial foundation for both academic and socio-emotional development. The first subtheme focuses on establishing and maintaining healthy relationships, and the topics are designed to support the development of social and prosocial skills to create a strong relationships network, such as making friends, seeking and providing support, and developing nurturing relationships (Masten, 2011). Peer relationships are a very important source of well-being and resilience for children, mediating the impact of adverse early experiences (Moses & Villodas, 2017). The first topic encourages learners to reflect on the value of friendship and to develop strategies to build and maintain relationships with friends and deal successfully with situations which put friendship at risk. The second topic focuses on how to seek and provide support to others, while in the third topic, learners have the opportunity to appreciate and practice reciprocal trust and care. The second subtheme is composed of activities to enhance cooperative skills, empathy and moral reasoning. The first topic is meant to develop such skills as taking turns, sharing, cooperation and teambuilding. The second topic is focused on recognizing and appreciating the motives, feelings, and behaviours of others. Empathy is an essential building block for successful interpersonal relationships. The third topic encourages learners to critically reflect on solutions to moral and ethical dilemmas and to practice ethical and responsible behaviours (Gasser & Malti, 2012).

Developing a growth mindset (We think positive, we feel happy). Recent neuroscience research is showing us that the architecture of the brain undergoes significant changes throughout our lives and that our brain is plastic and malleable (Pickersgill & Cunningham-Burley, 2015). Caroline Dweck (2017) illustrates the difference between fixed and flexible thinking and how we can train the brain to think more flexibly and positively. Developing a positive growth mindset is not only essential to manage challenges successfully but also to turn them into opportunities for growth and development (Dweck, 2017). The activities in this theme draw from positive psychology which values positive subjective approaches towards the past, present and future, and seeks to build positive qualities to prevent and deal effectively with psychological problems (Seligman et al 2004). This theme focuses on both cognitive processes such as optimistic thinking, positive self-talk and the disputation of negative thoughts, as well as emotional processes such as the awareness, expression and regulation of positive emotions. The first subtheme on the development of positive and optimistic thinking, particularly during setbacks, provides learners with opportunities to engage in optimistic thinking, to reflect on and challenge unhelpful thoughts, and consequently to overcome challenges with a positive attitude (Noble & McGrath, 2008; Seligman, 2011). The second subtheme, *Hope, Happiness and Self Compassion*, gives learners the opportunity to become aware of, identify and regulate positive emotions. Positive emotions broaden children's awareness, build their personal and social resources, and buffer against psychological problems (Seligman, 2011).

Developing self-determination (We can do it, we will do it). The first subtheme, problem solving, is one of the essential skills for dealing effectively with adversity (Hart and Heaver, 2013), moderating the impact of negative life events on wellbeing (Simões et al., 2009). It plays a key role in risk assessment, resources evaluation, the establishment of realistic plans, and the search for healthier relationships, essential skills for adaptation and resilience (Werner & Smith, 1992). The second subtheme focuses on developing a sense of empowerment and autonomy in the learner (Deci and Ryan, 2000). The first topic focuses on sense of purpose and meaning in life, giving learners the opportunity to think about global

and situational meaning. The search for meaning and goals in life is a main concern in an individual's life and, when accomplished, it has a protective effect (Noble & McGrath, 2008; Roffey, 2011). The second topic aims to foster agency and self-efficacy, helping learners to recognize that they can make things happen, achieve their goals and overcome obstacles. Among the mechanisms of human agency, none is more central than a sense of self-efficacy, since unless individuals believe they can bring desired effects by their actions, they have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties (Bandura, 1997). The third topic highlights the promotion of self-advocacy in learners. Self-advocacy is an important component of self-determination, standing as a moderator of the impact of adversity on the child's psychological well-being or as a mediator, promoting self-esteem, self-awareness and a greater connection to the community (Grover, 2005).

Building on strengths (We build on our strengths). Building on strengths is a strategic element in promoting resilience in children facing increasing stresses and disadvantage. This theme is focused on building a positive self-concept and self-esteem, exploring such topics as helping the learners to develop a positive view of themselves, their unique qualities and behaviour in various aspects of their lives (Weiten et al., 2012). Learners cover such topics as understanding who one is, becoming aware of one's strengths, and understanding how the past and present are part of who one is, while identifying one's dreams for the future.

Developing self-regulation (We keep focused, we remain calm). Self-regulation enables the child to control their behaviours, thoughts and emotions, including the management of potentially disruptive emotions and behaviours such as anxiety and anger. A child's ability to understand and cope with emotions, help them to think before acting, recognise and resist risks or consequences associated with certain actions, and help him/her to reflect and respond positively when things don't go their way (Shanker, 2013). Early adversity can undermine the child's ability to be aware of, to connect with and to regulate emotional experiences. The first topic "Maintaining motivation and attention" introduces learners to opportunities to identify and work on improving their levels of motivation and attention towards tasks or desired goals, particularly when experiencing feelings of frustration. Topics 2 and 3 are focused on the regulation of anger and anxiety respectively, and present learners with opportunities to recognise the emotions through bodily awareness and learn ways on how to express feelings of anger and anxiety constructively. Learners are presented with opportunities to make use of self-regulatory techniques.

Turning challenges into opportunities (We will overcome the obstacles). Teaching learners how to reframe and turn developmental challenges or life's stressors into opportunities for growth, will help them to engage in behaviors characterized by optimism, courage, and persistence (Seligman, 2011). Resilience thus becomes a transformational process, with the coping and adaptation process leading to a process of positive growth (Masten, 2021). The first topic provides opportunities for learners to develop courage, an optimistic mindset and persistence in the face of challenges and setbacks, and consequently to overcome difficulties and setbacks successfully. In the second topic, learners discuss how to cope with sickness and disability challenges, while the third topic addresses prejudice and discrimination, an experience frequently faced by vulnerable and marginalized children (Gartland et al., 2019). Dealing with rejection is the fourth topic, while the fifth topic on family related stressors, such as family conflict and separation and divorce, seeks to equip learners with the necessary strategies to deal effectively with such challenges (Chmitorz et al, 2019; Pedro-Caroll, 2010). In the sixth topic, the learners develop

the competence to understand and deal with life's various losses, such as losing a pet, a friend, or a loved one. Peer bullying is a common occurrence in many schools, particularly amongst vulnerable and marginalized children (Downes and Cefai, 2016; Ttofi and Farrington, 2011), and in the seventh topic, learners are provided with opportunities how to deal effectively with bullying situations. The final topic addresses with change and transitions in life, equipping learners with the skills to deal successfully with transitions and unexpected changes in life, turning these into opportunities for growth.

CHAPTER 3

Curriculum Pedagogy

A universal, inclusive curriculum

RESCUR Surfing The Waves is presented as an inclusive, universal programme targeting all learners in the classroom, but with activities reflecting the diversity of learners, particularly vulnerable and marginalized ones. Such approach addresses their needs by underlining their strengths within an inclusive setting. Thus while all the topics and activities are focused on themes which benefit vulnerable and marginalized learners, they do so without explicitly underlining the specific problems they may face, so as not to draw the classroom attention to the difficulties of such learners.

Each theme contains a number of activities focused on addressing diversity, particularly issues related to bullying, prejudice, discrimination, isolation, lack of friends, language barriers, difficulties in accessing learning, exclusion, or culture mismatch. The story in that particular activity reflects the challenges and difficulties of such learners, while the subsequent questions and activities encourage learners to find solutions to overcome such barriers and difficulties. Where possible, the learners are also asked to reflect on challenges (and solutions) which are more related to their own context and reality. The activities include also one or more questions on what other learners (not at risk) can do to help the character/s in difficulty, so as to encourage a culture of understanding, solidarity and support towards children at risk. Teachers may also make use of other resources such as story books to complement and reinforce the curriculum stories. Furthermore, the stories in the early years and early primary manuals are based on two specially created mascots which illustrate difference and diversity, namely a purple squirrel with glasses, and a hedgehog with broken spikes. Similarly the stories in the late primary school focus on children and adults who overcome barriers despite difference and disadvantage, such as well-known fables, legends, and real life success stories.

Classroom teachers need to be self-aware of their cultural baggage and be open-minded to adopt affirmative approaches towards their learners' diverse cultures; this is essential for adapting the curriculum and pedagogy to the diversity of backgrounds and characteristics of learners (Bartolo & Smyth 2009). The activities are presented at varying levels of difficulty (basic and advanced), making it more possible for the teacher to choose the activity level according to the readiness and developmental level of the learners. The experiential nature of the curriculum makes it easier for the teacher to engage in individualization as the content is brought up by the learners themselves.

This curriculum has been planned and evaluated within a cross-cultural framework by a multicultural team. However, teachers themselves need to ensure that it engages each learner to address their own resilience challenges. Teachers need to become familiar both with the curriculum as well as with the growth challenges of their learners. Clearly the focus should be on children's engagement. At the same time, however, given the variety of needs of learners in each classroom, teachers should aim to maintain the resilience framework of the curriculum and address all the themes and competences it contains. Thus the best way of adapting the curriculum to the classroom group would be to make use of the most effective way of personalizing any curriculum that is based on social and emotional skills:

make full use of those spots where the curriculum calls for the sharing of personal experience in relation to the issue raised, and of the instances where children have to role play or do other exercises related to their experience.

The teacher may present opportunities for learners to overcome all barriers in learning and participate actively in the activities by:

- › making regular use of the background experiences and cultures of all the learners in class, particularly when they come from minorities;
- › making use of different ways of communication to overcome language barriers – as far as possible including the native language of each of the learners, and where this is not possible using nonverbal, movement and music that are more universal forms of communication;
- › emphasising auditory information for the blind, and visual information for hearing impaired and deaf learners;
- › ensuring physical access to all learners including those with mobility impairment to all classroom and school areas and facilities and learning and social activities;
- › ensuring that all instruction and activities are meaningful to all learners including those with difficulties in learning and literacy: this may require use of examples from learners' backgrounds, use of non-verbal expression, using multiple levels of concepts and challenges;
- › providing space and opportunity for active participation in activities by each and every learner in the class;
- › enabling each learner to experience success by offering relevant challenges to all of them;
- › adopting a non-punitive, non-coercive approach when dealing with difficult behavior, seeking to engage learners with such behaviours through positive behavior management based on understanding, care and support, connective pedagogy and engaging activities.

The issue of making changes and adaptations in the delivery of the activities and the programme as a whole is discussed in chapter 6 on Implementation.

Dealing with sensitive topics and arising issues

RESCUR Surfing the Waves calls on teachers to enter the socio-emotional lives of their children. They are not expected, however, to engage in any therapeutic intervention beyond the usual empathic understanding and socio-emotional support that teachers regularly offer to children. However, given the intra- and inter- personal content and methods of this curriculum, teachers may become aware of deeper personal issues experienced by their learners. Great care should be taken to create a classroom atmosphere of respect for diversity and for others' personal experience. Furthermore, teachers need to be sensitive to the possible surfacing of traumatic experiences that children recall in dealing with any of the themes. This could be for instance abusive treatment by a parent or other person, or a traumatic loss of a parent or carer that might require more intensive and formal support from the psychological and other services offered by the school and education system. When a learner becomes uneasy, upset,

sad or anxious, the teacher provides immediate emotional support, signaling empathic understanding of the learner's upset. Depending on the nature of the issue, the teacher may intervene to provide a more positive and affirmative formulation of the issue, ask the help of another teacher to support the child while she engages the rest of the class, ask the group to provide support to the learner, change activity, do a mindfulness session, do an ice breaker/ game, ask learner to discuss the issue personally with him/her at a later point, and provide any required support following the activity, including if there is a need, the inclusion of the parents and the school's support services. It is thus imperative that the teacher is fully aware of the school's policy on what to do and whom to refer in cases of learners requiring psychological support. The teacher is also to inform the learners before the start of the session, particularly when dealing with sensitive topics such as those in Theme 6, that anyone feeling uncomfortable, upset or anxious, is to inform the teacher immediately. Furthermore the teacher may make arrangement with another member of staff (preferably present in the classroom) to provide support to individual learners if the need arises.

A related issue is when a learner expresses difficulties or concerns which are either inappropriate to discuss in a whole group or cannot be addressed in the session. In such instances, the teacher may suggest that it is better to continue discussion of the issue on a personal basis after the activity, but reassure the learner that support will be provided. The teacher may then organize a 'bubble time' session, where s/he listens and supports the learner on a one to one basis, followed if necessary by further sessions including involvement of parents, referral to support services, and/or a whole group circle time discussion as appropriate. It is advisable that before the start of the session the teacher advises the learners on what may nor may not be disclosed with the whole group, and that sharing of experiences when discussing personal and sensitive issues is not only voluntary, with learners having the right not to share experiences, but it should also be made carefully and discretionary.

Structure of activities

Each activity follows a sequenced structure, with explicit learning goals and learning outcomes, a mindfulness activity, storytelling, processing of the story, and practical, interactive activities such as role play, drawing and play. There is a focus on skills development through experiential and participative learning, with learners highly engaged in the learning process, and with the practice and application of the skill learnt in the activities, other academic subjects and take home activities. Teachers are also encouraged to make use of learner-led strategies, such as collaborative group work and peer tutoring and mentoring, during the activities.

Each activity consists of the following sections:

- › the topic, name of the activity
- › learning goal, that is, what the teacher would like the learners to learn;
- › learning outcomes, that is, what the learner would have learned at the end of the activity;
- › the resources used during the activity;
- › the steps of the activity;
- › take home activity which learners would do with their parents

Each activity consists of the following steps:

- › a mindfulness session (see below);
- › story telling session making use of puppets and finger puppets (early and primary years);
- › discussion and processing of the story, including role plays;
- › follow up activity, such as drawing, play, physical activity, singing, drama, role play, and activity worksheet;
- › take home activity: the teacher explains the activity, making use of the take home worksheets;
- › ice breakers and physical movement are strongly recommended through the session and more frequently with the early years and early primary school learners;
- › with the early years, the activities, including stories, need to be kept simple, concrete, and practical.
- › powerpoint presentations, including music, video clips, podcasts, and pictures, are strongly recommended to be used by the teacher.

SAFE approach

There is consistent evidence that effective resilience and social and emotional learning programmes adopt a sequenced step-by-step approach (Sequenced), make use of experiential and participative learning (Active), focus on skills development (Focused), and have explicit learning goals (Explicit) (Durlak et al., 2011). Each activity in the curriculum follows a sequenced structure, with explicit learning goals and learning outcomes, story-telling, discussion and processing of the story, and practical, hands-on activities. There is a focus on skills development through experiential, participative learning, with learners highly engaged in the learning process, and with the application of the skill in the post-story activities, other academic activities and take home activities. Learners are provided with opportunities to learn, practice and apply the skills through practical, multi modal strategies. In addition it is strongly recommended that teachers make use of learner-led strategies, such as collaborative group work, peer tutoring and mentoring during the activities, where the process itself becomes resilience enhancing (see also Chapter 4).

Duration of activities

The length of each activity varies from forty five minutes with younger children to one and half hours with older children, but it is recommended that each activity is held over two or possibly more different sessions, particularly in the early years. The first session may include the story and the processing questions, while the following session may include mindfulness the other steps of the activity, including the hands on activities. With the early years, repetition of the activities with some slight variation is also useful to facilitate and consolidate learning.

Story telling

A key characteristic of the curriculum is the development of resilience competencies through story telling. Sherlock the squirrel and Zelda the hedgehog are the two protagonists of the early years and early primary stories, while fables, traditional stories and real life stories are found in the late primary school activities. Story telling is a powerful medium for resilience development in children, and the curriculum provides learners with opportunities to experience stories related to the seven themes, exploring their thoughts and feelings on the topics, reflecting and gaining insights on their own behaviours, and consequently applying the stories to their own lives (cf. Cowie, 2018; Hankin et al., 2012). In the first activities, teachers are encouraged to dedicate some time to introduce the two mascots. The use of puppets is strongly recommended in the early years and early primary school activities, and it is advised that teachers make two cloth puppets of Sherlock and Zelda for use during the stories. They may also use finger puppets of the two mascots (Appendix 4) and cards of the other animals used in the stories (included in the soft version; see also Appendix 5). Use of power point presentations, music, songs and the interactive whiteboard, is also strongly recommended. Where possible dialogue may be introduced in the stories to facilitate the use of the puppets, and the story may also be developed into a play, with children enacting the main roles. As a follow up activity, the group may also create and role play another story, while the extension of the activity in other content areas of the curriculum may include literature stories on the topic. In the late primary school years, the stories are based on past or current real life resilient persons, country traditions, legends and folktales.



Figure 2: Sherlock and Zelda, the two mascots

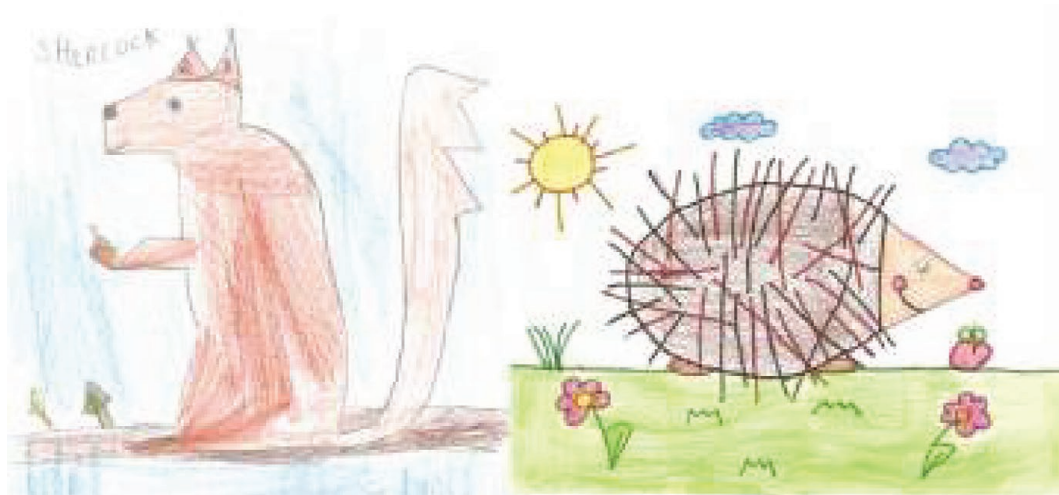


Figure 3: Young children's drawings of the two programme mascots

Mindfulness

In mindfulness activities, the learners learn to become more mindful and aware of their present thoughts, emotions and behaviour, by practicing such skills as breathing and sensation, mindful sitting and movement. The consequent focused attention and enhanced awareness facilitate their self-regulation and positive emotions such as happiness and optimism, engagement in the learning process, as well empathy, perspective taking and prosocial behaviour. Research indicates that mindfulness-based interventions for children and young people lead to decreased negative affect and anxiety levels, and increased calmness, emotional regulation, and social competence and enhanced attention and performance (Dunning et al., 2019; Kuyken et al, 2013; Mckeering and Hwang, 2019; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). In this curriculum, mindfulness education is presented as a secular and culturally responsive tool (Davidson et al, 2012), with developmentally appropriate exercises to maximize the window of opportunity provided by the developing brain in emotional regulation and executive functioning (Jennings et al., 2012). Each activity starts with a brief mindfulness exercise which teachers may choose from the mindfulness activities included in the soft version of the curriculum however, teachers may make use of their own exercises as long as these are culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate. Training on how teacher can implement the mindfulness activities in the classroom is necessary and will be provided during the training workshops for teachers.

BOX 2 *Mindfulness exercise: Breathing*

Tell the learners that they can use breathing whenever they feel they need to be more aware of themselves, or when they feel anxious or upset, etc. Breathing is a way to calm down and get in contact with oneself. Ask learners to sit (or lie) down comfortably, relax themselves and close their eyes if they wish to. Read the following instructions in a calm and soothing voice with soft background music

- ▶ Sit or lie down comfortably.
- ▶ Take a breath, and breathe out again.
- ▶ Take a deeper breath, and breathe out again.
- ▶ Take a breath and concentrate on your breathing. Where is the air coming in and where is it going out? Feel the air in your lungs. Put your hand on your stomach, can you feel your stomach breathing? When you breathe in, your stomach widens, and when you breathe out your stomach flattens.
- ▶ Now lie still for a while and just concentrate on your breathing. Let your thoughts come and go.
- ▶ Try not to pay attention to them, just sit or lie and breathe and concentrate on your breathing.

After this exercise is over, remind the learners that they can practice this breathing exercise whenever they feel they need to be more aware of themselves, or when they feel anxious or upset.



By adding this (mindfulness) on, you not only create more academically capable, successful students, but actually create more caring, less stressed, kind students.

(Schoner-Reichl et al., 2015)



Resources

In line with the experiential, participative approach of the curriculum, *RESCUR Surfing The Waves* contains various resources which the teacher can use when delivering the curriculum. These include amongst others,

- › Two story books with drawings, *The Adventures of Sherlock and Zelda* (Early Years) and *More Adventures of Sherlock and Zelda* (Early Primary).
- › Samples of finger puppets of the two mascots used in the stories (early years and early primary activities) (Appendix 4)
- › Set of cards illustrating the animals used in the stories in the early years and early primary (soft version; see sample in Appendix 5).
- › Sets of worksheets to be used by the learners during the activities (soft version)
- › Sets of worksheets for parents to be used at home with the children (soft version)
- › Mindfulness activities (soft version) (see also Box 2 for a sample activity)
- › Music which may be used during mindfulness and other activities (soft version)
- › Coloured Posters on each theme with a slogan (soft version; see sample in Appendix 7).
- › Learner portfolio cover to be printed for each learner (Appendix 6).
- › Teacher and learner assessment checklists at the end of each theme.
- › Teachers are also strongly encouraged to make use of the following resources when delivering the curriculum:
 - › Powerpoint presentations when introducing the activities, including the stories, questions and other activities
 - › Use of multimedia resources including interactive whiteboard, youtube clips, dvds, podcasts, interactive games, songs, story books, and other resources.
 - › Use of movement and action, including role plays, play, physical exercise, and hands on activities during the activities, particularly with young learners.
 - › A resilience corner may be set up in each classroom, including the mascots, posters finger puppets, pictures, artefacts, and learners' work (see Box 3).

BOX 3 Resilience Corner

A group of early years' teachers described how they created a resilience corner in their classroom. They pasted a big colourful banner with the title of the program made by pupils in one corner of the classroom. Then they put a large piece of fabric in which they made a forest, including a big tree. They pasted Sherlock on the tree and put Zelda under the tree. Every time the group did an activity, the teachers wrote down some of the learners' ideas, such as how Zelda can feel better, Zelda's action plan, Sherlock's secret, the message of the story, or key words of the activity. The teachers made use of the corner in the everyday life of the classroom, such as asking learners to reflect on what the mascots would have said in that instance, or going to the corner to read some of the ideas exhibited there.

Learners' Portfolio

Teachers making use of *RESCUR Surfing The Waves* are to help each learner develop a Learner Portfolio where they can record and include all their work from the school and home activities. The portfolio may have a section for each of the seven themes, with space for the worksheets used in the classroom, the take-home worksheets, drawings, pictures, reflections, and other materials used. Learners may also record their thoughts and feelings about their experience of the theme, making use of various modes of presentation, such as reflections on what they liked, what they learnt and what they need to develop more (older children), writing a story, drawing something, or adding a picture/photo. The portfolio will also include the learner's self-assessment checklist for each theme (older learners). It is recommended that a new portfolio is started at the beginning of each scholastic year. Teachers and parents may also discuss how the parents may make use of the learner's portfolio when implementing the take home-activities. Appendix 6 is the cover which may be used for the Learner Portfolio; teachers may print or photocopying for each learner to attach on the front page of the portfolio.

Theme Posters

Each theme includes also a poster with a slogan capturing the nature of that theme as follows:

- Theme 1:** *We listen and we understand*
- Theme 2:** *We build strong relationships*
- Theme 3:** *We think positive, we feel happy*
- Theme 4:** *We can do*
- Theme 5:** *We build on our strengths*
- Theme 6:** *We keep focused, we remain calm*
- Theme 7:** *We will overcome the obstacles*

The colour posters may be found in the soft version of this guide. The posters may be printed in colour and displayed in the classroom and in the other school spaces during the implementation of that specific theme (see also Appendix 7 for a sample of one of the posters).

Parents' participation and contribution

School-based programmes are more likely to be effective in resilience building when they are supported by complementary home-based interventions. The active participation of parents not only helps to reinforce the resilience competencies being learnt at school, but also enables the transfer of the competencies to different contexts such as the home, peer group and community (Downey & Williams, 2010; Goldberg et al, 2019; Hart and Heaver, 2013; Weare & Nind, 2011). Parental involvement in *RESCUR Surfing The Waves* is facilitated through various ways. Firstly, each activity includes a take-home task where parents and children work together on tasks related to the school activity of the day. Take-home worksheets are given to the learners by the teachers on the day of the activity and attached to the learner portfolio. In the subsequent activity, teachers may give learners the opportunity to give feedback, on a voluntary basis, on what they and their parents did in the take home activity. However, learners should be left free whether they want to share their experience or not. Another recommendation to engage parents' collaboration is to allow the learners in turn to take home the mascot puppets for one day. Secondly, parents are provided with a Parents' Guide by the school to be used in parallel with the school activities. The Guide encourages parents to adopt the resilience approach in parenting, providing specific scenarios, case studies and practical strategies for each of the curriculum themes.

Finally, empowering the parents to address their own wellbeing and resilience, is another important component in a whole school approach to resilience building (Downey & Williams, 2010; Bryan & Henry, 2012; Twum-Antwi et al.; 2019). The school may thus provide opportunities for parents for their own education, wellbeing and resilience, offering accessible and culture-sensitive information and resources, links to community services and facilities such as accessible, high quality early care and education centres, and home-based coaching on building relationships with children, and parent-led family learning and personal development courses (Cefai & Cavioni, 2014).

Embedded in the other areas of the curriculum and the whole classroom climate

The teachers are strongly encouraged to embed the resilience competencies into the other content areas of the curriculum in a structured way so as to facilitate the generalization and internalization of such competencies (Aspen, 2017). This process improves academic learning as well, since competencies such as positive thinking, emotional regulation, self-efficacy, self-regulation, problem solving, using one's strengths, asking for helping, and persistence, support learners' academic learning. In this way, resilience education becomes a central aspect of classroom practice. The resilience competence being explicitly taught during a particular period of time, is thus repeatedly and regularly infused and practiced in the other content areas of the curriculum with the teacher's prompting and support. Each theme includes also a number of 'teacher tips' on how the teacher may embed the resilience competencies in the other content areas of the curriculum as well as in the overall classroom climate. Teachers are strongly recommended to embed the resilience competences in the daily classroom activities through their relationships, practices, pedagogy and behavior management; this is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

Assessment

In line with the inclusive and developmental approach of the curriculum, resilience assessment in this programme is developmental and formative rather than normative and standardised, avoiding the potential risk of labelling children into resilient and non-resilient. A teachers' and learners' checklists have been developed for each theme to be completed at the end of each theme respectively (see checklists in Appendices 1 and 2). Each checklist includes the resilience learning outcomes of each theme and subtheme. Each learning outcome has two statements at basic and advanced levels respectively. The teacher completes the checklist on each learner at the end of the theme to evaluate whether the learning goals have been adequately developed or still need support in developing. The basic or advanced statements are filled according to the corresponding level covered in the curriculum. The checklist has also a qualitative component, namely information on the learners' strengths, needs and targets for further improvement. The checklists may be completed as soft copies which will make it easier for the teacher to record the data.

The learner self-assessment checklist (early and late primary only) follows the same format as the teacher's checklist, but the response items evaluate first whether the learner is able to perform that competence (whether the competence has been grasped), and secondly whether s/he likes to practice that competence (whether the competence has been internalised and included in the learner's behaviour repertoire). The qualitative component asks which competences the learner enjoyed and which ones s/he would like to improve.

With the early primary school years, the checklist may be group-administered with the teacher reading, explaining and illustrating each statement followed by learners ticking the appropriate responses individually. Digital technology may also help to make the checklist more child-friendly and interactive, with learners also being given direct feedback on their scores, such as an automatic animated profile of strengths and needs, which may then be discussed with peers and the teacher. The teacher may give general guidelines on the implications of the scores for each statement and total score, while giving learners the opportunity to share their findings with self-selected peers, the teacher, and/or the whole group through circle time (Cefai & Cavioni, 2014). The completed checklists are then included in the learner's portfolio. With the younger learners, particularly the early years and the early primary, the teacher may devise more visual, practical activities to help the learners engage in self-reflection and evaluation, such as drawings, role plays, use of puppets, and circle time discussions. The learner's portfolio may also be useful for such activities.

CHAPTER 4

A Whole School Approach to Resilience

RESCUR Surfing the Waves also makes provision for the resilience skills to be 'caught' through the classroom ecology and the whole school contexts. The caught component aims to bring multiple changes in the whole school culture, and changing the way teachers and administrative staff think about children's resilience and well-being, underlining the importance of students' mental health, well-being and resilience in both the academic and social domains (Cefai, 2008; Pianta and Stuhlman, 2004; Weare and Nind, 2011). The teaching of resilience skills by the classroom teacher at both curricular and cross curricular levels also impacts teachers' overall practice and leads to a paradigm shift in teaching and learning in the classroom with resilience education embedded with the whole classroom climate (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009; Jennings et al, 2017). The classroom relationships, pedagogy, activities, resources, and management, thus provide a context where pupils can practice and apply the competences learned both in the classroom and outside.

Within a whole-school approach to resilience, the school community, together with parents and the local community, are engaged in resilience building in all aspects of school life, while the competences learnt in the classroom are promoted and reinforced at the whole-school level in a structured and complementary way. Such an approach helps to create a supportive whole-school context and ethos conducive to more effective resilience outcomes (Cefai and Cavioni, 2014; Goldberg et al, 2019; Weare and Nind, 2011).

The curriculum includes a parents' manual to encourage parents to reinforce the skills learnt at school and to adopt the resilience philosophy in parenting their children. Empowering parents and communities not only to engage collaboratively with the school, but to address their own well-being and resilience, is another important component in a whole school approach to resilience building (Downey and Williams, 2010; Matsopoulos and Luthar, 2020). Finally, student resilience is symbiotic with the teachers' own resilience, as tired and burnt-out teachers are unlikely to be in a position to foster learners' resilience. School staff thus needs to take active steps to maintain their own health, well-being and resilience in their efforts to promote students' resilience (Beltman et al., 2011; Mansfield et al, 2012).

The teaching of resilience impacts the teachers' overall practice and leads to a paradigm shift in teaching and learning, with resilience education becoming embedded within the whole classroom climate (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). *RESCUR Surfing the Waves* aims to bring multiple changes in the whole school culture, underlining the importance of learners' mental health, well-being and resilience. Learners provided with protective and healthy social contexts are more effective in coping with adversity and thriving academically and socially than peers with lower levels of protection (Ungar, 2012; Ungar, 2020). Vulnerable and marginalized children are the most to gain from a stable, healthy school environment, which provides them with the support to overcome the negative influences in

other aspects of their lives and with opportunities to thrive and move forward (Twum Antwi et al., 2019; Werner & Smith, 1992). The classroom and school relationships, pedagogy, activities, resources, and management, may thus provide a context where learners feel safe and included, while regularly and frequently observing and practicing the resilience competencies learned during the classroom activities.

A nurturing and safe learning environment characterized by caring relationships, sense of belonging, and active student engagement in learning, reduces the stress of discrimination and exclusion and provides a safe and empowering base which facilitates children's learning and social emotional development (Cefai, 2008; Gartland, et al, 2019; Twum-Antwi et al, 2019; Ungar, 2018). A caring teacher-learner relationship is a highly protective factor, providing a psychological structure within which disadvantaged children may grow and thrive. It is associated with learners' positive interactions with peers, emotional regulation, academic achievement and fewer behaviour problems (Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004).

In resilience enhancing classrooms, learners are provided with opportunities to participate actively and influentially in meaningful classroom activities adapted to their needs. They are encouraged to take more responsibility for their own behaviour and make their own academic and social choices. Teachers hold high expectations for all learners, including those at risk. All learners are expected to learn and achieve and are supported to do so, despite any difficulties. Rather than focusing on deficit and weaknesses, teachers adopt a growth mindset, concentrating on strengths and success for all, aiming to remove structural, pedagogical, and curricular barriers in the way of the learners' academic and social development.



Within this philosophy every teacher-child interaction becomes an opportunity to promote resilience... (the teachers) need to be aware of the potential their interactions and behaviour have to influence the mental health and resilience of their students. Resilience is absorbed by children who learn in an environment that is supportive, challenging and involving, in which the innate potential of each child is believed in and nurtured.

(Benard, 2004)



A resilience-enhancing, classroom community

Through the study of good practices in various primary schools, Cefai (2008) developed a universal, inclusive framework of how the classroom context may operate as a resilience enhancing context for all learners. It construes the classroom as a caring and inclusive learning community, characterised by caring and supportive relationships, active and meaningful learner engagement, collaboration, inclusion of all learners in the learning and social processes, positive beliefs and high expectations, and learner autonomy and participation in decisions.

Caring teacher-learners relationships

A healthy teacher-learners relationship provides a scaffold of support and stability for vulnerable students, while an unhealthy one often leads to student disengagement and disaffection (Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004; Hamre and Pianta, 2001). The quality of the relationship is illustrated in the instructional support provided such as quality and constructive feedback promoting high expectations and challenging and relevant tasks, socioemotional support such as warmth, safety and connectedness, and classroom organization and management such as fair and consistent classroom rules, and positive behavior support (Wang et al, 2020). In resilience-enhancing classrooms, teachers take a dual role as effective and nurturing educators, supporting learners' academic as well as social and emotional learning. They show interest and respect, listen to learners' stories and concerns, express warmth and encouragement, provide support, and nurture learners' strengths. They give priority to teaching and learning experiences within a culture of care. Learners thus feel safe, valued and trusted, taking risks and making mistakes without the fear of feeling humiliated or embarrassed. Gradually they start to develop more positive views of themselves and of their abilities and strengths, building a more positive identity of themselves which will also protect them from the difficulties and risks they are likely to encounter.

A culture of support and solidarity

Peer relationships in the classroom constitute another important social context for children's resilience. Learners who feel accepted and respected by their classroom peers, who have friends with whom they can work and play, are more likely to exhibit motivation, engagement, achievement and positive interactions with peers (Battistich et al., 2004; Wang et al., 2020). In resilience-enhancing classrooms, learners support each another, solve conflicts constructively, share interests, and celebrate personal and classroom events together. Competition is discouraged, bullying not tolerated, while peer mentoring is a common practice in the classroom (see Box 4).

Active and genuine engagement

Learners are provided with opportunities for genuine engagement in classroom activities where their skills, efforts and achievements are nurtured and recognised. They participate actively in meaningful activities that make use of learner-centred and activity-based strategies connected to their life experiences, fostering a sense of competence and confidence (Linnenbrink & Pintrich 2003). There is a focus on learning rather than just performance and examinations. The celebration of learners' achievements and efforts is common practice. Learning thus becomes a highly motivating and enjoyable experience. Furthermore, there is a dual focus on both academic and social and emotional learning, and both are considered important in children's education. Such a focus promotes academic achievement, engagement, positive behaviour and healthy relationships (Durlak et al., 2011).

BOX 4 Peer mentoring in primary school

MiniMentors (www.minimentors.org.uk) is a mentoring programme for 5–11-year-old pupils in primary schools in the UK. The programme seeks to promote friendship and making friends, inclusion, sense of belonging and reciprocal care. The mentors are trained in how to look after other children at the school, play with them, make them feel part of the school, listen to them when they want to share something, and help them to solve problems.

VISTA (Cowie & Jennifer, 2010) is a whole school programme on the prevention of violence, bullying and exclusion in schools with online activities and materials. It consists of five units, with exercises on conflict resolution, mediation, restorative practice and peer support. More information, including a specific module on peer mentoring (Children Helping Children) be found at www.um.edu.mt/cres/publications

Inclusion and success for all

Resilience-enhancing classrooms are inclusive communities, providing a flexible, accommodating learning environment according to the individual needs of the learners (Bartolo et al, 2007; European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2017). The group is open to all irrespective of any difference, and all learners are provided with equal opportunity to participate meaningfully and successfully in the academic and social activities. Classroom teachers appreciate the significance of multiple intelligences and different learning styles and readiness levels, and support learners according to their needs and strengths. They promote and reinforce the values, of including, respecting and helping one another. They have high but reasonable expectations for all learners, and clearly communicate these positive beliefs and expectations in their daily practice.

Collaboration and teamwork

Resilience-enhancing classrooms underline the value and benefits of collaborative learning in both academic and social goals, such as listening to and understanding others, working and learning together, sharing with, helping and mentoring others. Rather than competing with one another, learner works collaboratively in small or big groups and are rewarded for positive interdependent work and effort. Everybody is a winner. The teamwork and collegiality between the class teacher and other members of staff and the collaboration between teachers and parents, also help to promote and maintain the value and importance of collaborative learning.

Choice and voice

In resilience-enhancing classrooms, learners are considered as responsible individuals capable of making good choices in their learning and social interactions. They are thus provided with opportunities where they can make choices and decisions. They are supported to set their own learning goals and engage in self- evaluation, to make choices on how to behave, and find their own solutions to difficulties and conflicts. Besides involving the learners in decision making, the teacher demonstrates high expectations, positive beliefs and hope in the learners, and provide opportunities for success and for recognition of effort and achievements (Linnenbrink & Pintrich 2003).

Whole school ecology

RESCUR Surfing the Waves construes the whole school operating as a resilience-enhancing community formed of interconnected and interdependent systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). A curriculum approach to resilience needs to be part of a whole school approach, with the whole school community supporting and reinforcing a climate conducive to resilience. This provides a complementary, value added effect, reinforcing the work undertaken in the classrooms and consequently determining the relationships and behaviours of the school members (Goldberg et al, 2019; Weare & Nind, 2011). When the whole school mobilises all its resources to promote the well-being and resilience of its members, the school ecology becomes a pervasive process for the promotion and development of resilience throughout the school, making use of interpersonal and contextual supports. A resilience enhancing school climate is characterized by the following processes (cf. Cefai & Cavioni, 2014; Thapa et al, 2013; Weare & Nind, 2011):

- › caring and collaborative relationships amongst all its members including
 - › student-teachers relationships
 - › staff collegiality and collaboration
 - › prosocial student behavior with policies and practices in place to prevent bullying and promote prosocial behaviour on the school premises;
- › meaningful, active and influential engagement of learners, staff and parents, including opportunities for members to participate actively in school activities and in decision making at the various school fora, including student council, school council, parents- teachers association, staff meetings and staff development initiatives;
- › the active inclusion of all members of the community, including all learners, members of staff and parents irrespective of any difference or background, within an ethos of solidarity, social justice and equity;
- › adequate support to the emotional wellbeing of school members, including a supportive, empowering administration, and peer education and mentoring for learners, staff and parents.

A whole school approach to resilience ensures that all the school staff are on board in the implementation of the curriculum, with all classroom teachers delivering the curriculum collaboratively, sharing practice, exchanging resources and providing mutual support and mentoring. Frequent and regular meetings amongst staff during the implementation would be very effective in this regard. All staff would have received training in the implementation of the curriculum and provided with resources and other forms of support by the school administration. Whole school activities to reinforce aspects of the curriculum throughout the whole school (eg theme of the week/ month) involving administration, staff, students and parents, through presentations, exhibitions, and fairs amongst others, would be an important part of this approach. In this way learners are exposed to a particular theme in the classroom, at the school and at home simultaneously (see also Chapter 6). Box 5 describes illustrates how the schoolyard may be turned into a laboratory for resilience enhancement.

The role of the parents in resilience parenting and the implementation of the curriculum has been discussed in a previous chapter; the classroom teachers' own resilience is described in the next chapter.

BOX 5 *Resilient schoolyards*

In their book *Resilient Schoolyards*, Doll and Brehm (2009) extend resilience beyond the classroom, and describe how the recess can be used constructively to support strong interpersonal relationships and self-regulated play. They present an evidence-based, problem solving framework making use of strategies and interventions to turn school playgrounds into centres of resilience and social emotional learning. These range from simple changes in routines and practices that minimize conflict, stop bullying, discourage rule breaking and peer aggression, and help students to make and keep friends, to evidence based programmes such as bullying prevention, social and emotional learning and problem solving programmes. They provide action steps on how school staff may assess the playground experience, design and implement consequent interventions, and evaluate the outcome of such interventions.

CHAPTER 5

Teachers' Resilience

When teachers' own interpersonal needs are addressed, they are more likely to pay attention to the social and emotional needs of their own students. In their efforts to promote students' resilience, school staff thus needs to take active steps to maintain their own wellbeing and resilience. This is particularly true in the face to the challenges they are set to meet in their daily practice, such as heavy workload and marking, administrative work, emotional demands, excessive reforms, lack of structures to participate in decisions, pressure to increase grades, classroom management and addressing parental concerns (Beltman et al, 2011; Eurydice, 2021; Fleming et al, 2013; Gu & Day, 2013). Teaching is considered as a highly stressful career with high levels of burnout, turnover and attrition (Eurydice, 2021; Reichl et al, 2014). Kelchtermans (2011) describes teaching as a 'vulnerable profession'. Such a situation makes it thus imperative that proposals to enhance student resilience need to be accompanied by parallel initiatives to support teachers' own resilience as well.

The literature has identified various factors which are protective of teachers at risk of stress and burnout (Beltman et al, 2011; Day & Gu, 2014; Galea, 2014; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Mansfield et al, 2016; Morgan, 2011). These include individual characteristics such as a sense of vocation and commitment, strong intrinsic motivation, hardiness, good coping, problem solving and classroom management skills, high self-efficacy, a growth mindset, objective analysis of unpleasant experiences, and balancing work-life issues. Protective contextual factors include staff collegiality and support, mentoring relationships, opportunities for continuing professional development, and supportive administration. Cefai and Cavioni (2014) suggest an integrated framework of teacher resilience, underlining teachers' psychological resources on one hand, and a caring and supportive context on the other. These two sets of factors complement and support one another. A supportive, protective context enhances teachers' resilience which leads to further resilient practices and reinforces individual resilience processes, such as belief and confidence in oneself as an effective teacher. Similarly individual resilience processes contribute to practices which promote the development of a healthy classroom climate which in turn feeds back into the teachers' own social and emotional competence and resilience. This approach also underlines that resilience helps not only to protect teachers from the risks of stress, burnout and other psychological difficulties, but it leads to the creation of a context where teachers will grow and thrive professionally and personally. Teacher resilience is not only about surviving and coping but also about thriving and growing. Beltman (2020) maintains that research evidence and recent systemic views support this broad framework of teacher resilience which includes both individual and contextual processes, together with the strategies employed to maintain wellbeing and health and the consequent positive outcomes.

Teachers' own psychological resources

School teachers need to be equipped with the requisite psychological tools to enable them to respond effectively to the demands and challenges of working in difficult conditions, to strengthen the relationships with colleagues, students and parents, and sustain their own motivation, sense of efficacy and personal agency (Zembylas & Schutz, 2009). They need to possess high emotional awareness and understanding, be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, and are able to regulate their emotions. They need to be able to express positive emotions, have high self efficacy, be effective in problem solving and decision making. Resilient teachers need also to have high social awareness and skills, are able to understand the perspectives and feelings of others, build healthy relationships and relate effectively and collaboratively with others (Beltman et al, 2011; Jennings et al., 2017; Mansfield, et al., 2016). Mansfield et al (2012) identify four dimensions of the resilient teacher, namely, emotional, motivational, social and profession related, with each dimension having a number of specific resilience-enhancing qualities as illustrated below (see also Figure 4).

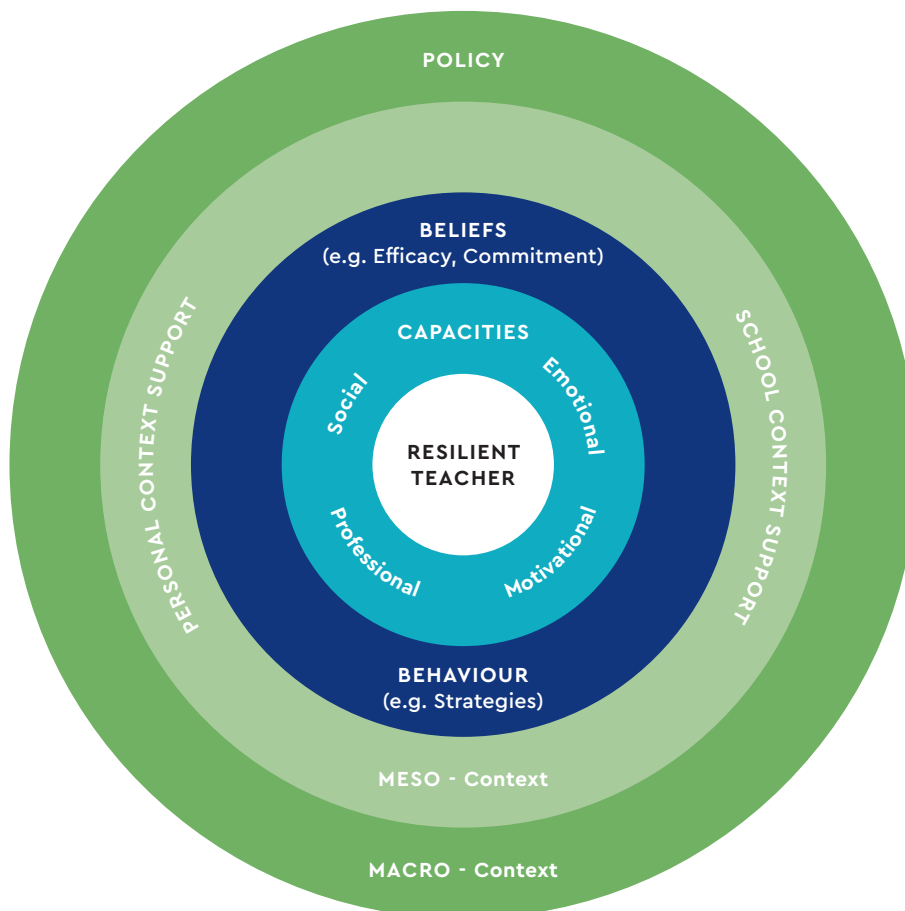


Figure 4: Teacher resilience framework (ENTRÉE, 2014).

› Emotional dimension

- › copes with job demands/stress
- › is able to bounce back
- › cares for own wellbeing
- › does not take things personally
- › regulates emotions
- › has a sense of humour
- › enjoys teaching

› Motivational dimension

- › has a positive and optimistic attitude
- › persists in the face of difficulties
- › is focused on learning and improving
- › has confidence and self belief
- › likes challenge
- › maintains motivation and enthusiasm
- › sets realistic expectations and goals

› Social dimension

- › Solves problems
- › Seeks help and takes advice
- › Builds support and relationships
- › Has strong interpersonal and communication skills

› Profession-related dimension

- › Is flexible and adaptable
- › Is reflective and reflexive
- › Is committed to students
- › Is prepared and organized
- › Has effective teaching skills

Both initial and continuing teacher education programmes can provide opportunities and support for teachers to develop these competencies. Box 6 illustrates how mindfulness can be a useful medium to help teachers develop some of these competencies.

A resilience enhancing context

The literature on teachers' resilience is very clear on the need to provide a context which actively and adequately supports teachers' professional development, and provides opportunities for capacity building, enabling teachers to thrive and achieve satisfaction and fulfilment in their career (Beltman et al., 2011; Day & Gu, 2014; Papatraianou & Le Cornu 2014; Ungar, 2012). Day and Gu (2014) argue that rather than concentrating on stress factors, we need to focus more on understanding what schools and organisations can do to build teachers' resilience capacity. Similarly Johnson and Down (2013) and Ungar (2012) argue against reductionism and exclusive individualism in seeking to understand and promote teacher resilience, underlining that teacher resilience needs to be examined within the wider context of institutional, cultural and social conditions. Contexts such as work, family, friends and social networks, as well as the broader socio-cultural, political and economic contexts, play a crucial role in teachers' wellbeing and resilience (Johnson & Down, 2013; Mansfield et al., 2012).

Schools are one of the most immediate, central and critical contexts for the promotion of teacher resilience. Resilience-enhancing school contexts are characterised by the following processes:

- › Collegial and collaborative staff relationships at both formal and informal levels;
- › supportive and understanding administration, including supportive feedback, provision of support and opportunities for professional development, active participation and decision making;
- › opportunities for staff to participate actively in the life of the school and in decision making;
- › opportunities for staff to develop and make use of their strengths and expertise, and for recognition and celebration of strengths and achievements;
- › opportunities for staff to engage in continuing professional development in areas such as behaviour management, social and emotional competence, mindfulness education, and stress management;
- › opportunities for staff to engage in physical and psychological self care;
- › opportunities for staff to have a good work-life balance, including good and flexible working conditions;
- › provision of adequate human and physical resources;
- › induction and support for new members of staff;
- › mentoring schemes, particularly for new members of staff and staff experiencing difficulties (see Box 7);
- › provision of psychological support to staff in difficulty, including bullying, stress, and psychological problems;
- › a collegial, inclusive culture where all members of staff are included, supported and provided with equal opportunities;
- › an open environment where schools work in close collaboration with, and are supported by, parents and the community.

(Beltman et al, 2011; Day & Gu, 2014; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Fleming et al, 2013; Mansfield et al, 2016; Morgan, 2011; Papatraianou & Le Cornu 2014).

BOX 6 *Mindfulness for teachers*

Mindfulness is a useful tool to cultivate teachers' 'habits of mind' promoting their health, well-being and social and emotional competence (Roeser, et al., 2012). It has been linked to both emotional awareness and management and to social awareness and healthier relationships. The Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE) programme (Jennings et al, 2017) is a 30 hours mindfulness-based programme designed to promote teachers' wellbeing, social and emotional competence and relationships with the students. The authors reported that teachers who complete the programme reported significant positive benefits on their classroom practice such as enhanced relationships with students and more effective classroom management, as well as improved emotional regulation and sense of well-being. Emerson (2017) reported a positive impact on teachers' emotion regulation and to a lesser extent on perceived stress but not on professional self-efficacy.

BOX 7 *Mentoring and attrition*

Mentoring is an important pathway to caring relationships, collegiality and support, acting as a protective factor against attrition, particularly amongst early teachers. In their review of the impact of mentoring and induction of newly qualified teachers, Ingersoll and Strong (2011) found that it has a positive impact on teachers' commitment and retention, teachers' classroom practices and student achievement. The mentoring processes involved in reducing attrition include having the mentors and mentees from a common subject/field in the same school, time and opportunity to work collaboratively with other teachers in the same field, well-prepared mentors, induction for new teachers and external support networks (Smith & Ingersoll 2004). In a more recent longitudinal study, Maready et al (2021) concluded that effective mentoring for newly qualified teachers must be specific, frequent, and tailored to the needs of the respective mentees, with the new teachers being provided with opportunities to observe more experienced peers, while they themselves are observed by their mentors, and provided with feedback on how to improve their practice. The authors recommend that the "mentoring practices implemented in each school should be matched to the changing needs of the new teacher. Initially, the supports address immediate needs for the first few weeks of school. As the mentor observes instruction, areas of concern are addressed. Frequency of supports are determined by identified need, and once specific skills are mastered, the frequency should decrease to a rate ensuring maintenance of the skill. As other concerns emerge, they can be addressed in an ongoing manner. The process of identifying concerns and addressing needs are all predicated upon regular observations and frequent (at least weekly) meetings and discussions" (p.96).

CHAPTER 6

Curriculum Implementation

Resilience and wellbeing programmes in school are unlikely to be successful unless they are well planned and implemented. High quality implementation, fidelity, evaluation and sustainability are key factors for programme effectiveness (Greenberg 2010; Humphrey et al. 2019). Issues such as readiness and capacity to bring about change, quality of material, supports available at the school, and staff education as well facilitating processes and contextual barriers need to be considered at both planning and implementation stages (Durlak et al, 2011; Humphrey et al, 2019; Weare & Nind, 2011). The following sections describe some of the issues schools and teachers will need to take into account when planning to implement *RESCUR Surfing The Waves*¹.

Leadership, planning and direction

One of the first tasks in the implementation of the curriculum is for the school administration to provide the vision, guidance and support for a whole school approach to resilience building. In collaboration with the other members of the staff, the administration facilitates the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum, and provides guidance, encouragement and support in this process. An implementation team, consisting of administration, staff, parents and students, monitors the implementation, providing training, support, and resources as necessary, while seeking to overcome any obstacles and ensure that all school members appreciate the value and usefulness of this initiative and are fully committed and actively engaged. Some parents may be concerned about some of the values being promoted, some teachers may have doubts about their competence in delivering the curriculum, while some teachers and parents may not be convinced about the relevance and value of the curriculum. The education of both school staff and parents may help to identify these and other potential barriers such as resistance resulting from anxiety or lack of information, and discuss ways how to resolve these and other emerging problems.

Staff education and development

Although this Guide is self-explanatory and simple to use, it is mandatory that all school staff involved in curriculum implementation attend training sessions on how to implement *RECUR Surfing The Waves*. Lack of positive attitudes, knowledge and skills many not only lead to uncommitted and disengaged staff, but also to fragmented and poor-quality implementation (Askill-Williams et al., 2013; Humphrey et al, 2019). School teachers frequently complain that while they believe that they have a role in

¹ Some of the suggestions in this chapter have been adapted from Cefai & Cavioni (2014)

promoting children’s wellbeing and resilience, they are often not provided with adequate education and resources in order for them to exercise such a role effectively (eg. Reinke et al., 2011; Vostanis, et al., 2013). Furthermore adequate training will maintain programme integrity which is crucial for its success and effectiveness. Teacher education would focus on four main areas:

- › appreciating the importance and need for resilience building as a key competence for students’ learning and wellbeing, and the key role of classroom teachers, school staff and parents in this process;
- › learning how to actually implement the RESCUR Surfing The Waves in the classroom;
- › learning how to promote student resilience through the classroom and whole school climates;
- › learning how to develop one’s own resilience as a school teacher.

It is recommended that training is organised according to age group, in small groups (experiential and skills based), and spread over a number of weeks (rather than intensively over a number of successive days), with regular time for mentoring as part of the implementation process. It is also recommended that the teachers being trained and implementing the curriculum will also share experiences, exchange information and resources, discuss emerging issues, and provide mentoring and support to each other. They may do so both within the school and also across schools, regions and countries through virtual platforms and social media, such as a *RESCUR Surfing The Waves Facebook*.

BOX 8 Training workshops

Schools, educational authorities or any other organisation interested in implementing *RESCUR Surfing The Waves* may contact one of the following partners to organise a training workshop:

Professor Carmel Cefai

📍 Centre for Resilience and
Socio-Emotional Health
University of Malta, Malta
✉ carmel.cefai@um.edu.mt

Professor Renata Miljevic-Ridicki

Faculty of Teacher Education,
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Professor Anastassios Matsopoulos

📍 Preschool Education Department
University of Crete, Rethymno,
Crete, Greece
✉ matsopoulos@gmail.com

Professor Maria Assunta Zanetti / Dr Valeria Cavioni

📍 Department of Brain & Behavioral
Sciences - Psychology Section,
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Professor Celeste Simões

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Dr Birgitta Kimber

📍 Department of Health & Medical Sciences
Örebro University
Örebro, Sweden
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Facilitating Parents' Participation

Recruiting the collaboration, active involvement and support of the parents is crucial for the success of this curriculum. A similar training workshop to that teachers may be organised for the parents as well, not only to inform them on what the school is doing, but particularly on their role in the implementation of the activities at home. The training workshop would focus on these five main aspects:

- ▶ appreciating the importance and need for resilience building as a key contribution to their children's healthy development, learning and wellbeing;
- ▶ clarifying their role in supporting the school teacher and school staff in the implementation of RESCUR Surfing The Waves, including the take home activities and coming to schools to share feedback on the activities;
- ▶ learning how to make use of the Parents' Guide to promote their children's resilience;
- ▶ learning how to develop one's own resilience as a parent.
- ▶ establishing a support/mentoring parents' group

As in the case of teachers in the previous chapter, parents will also be provided with mentoring and support by the school. They are also encouraged and supported to organize their own support group groups to share experiences, exchange information and resources, discuss emerging issues, and provide mentoring and support to each other. They may do so both within the school and the community as well as through virtual platforms and social media, such as a *RESCUR Surfing The Waves Parents Facebook*.



Although adequate resources are an important prerequisite of implementation, the capacity of schools to embed and "own" the initiative is likely to play a role in determining the longer-term success of (the programme) in their school.

(Graetz et al., 2008, p. 19)



Implementation

Once the curriculum starts being implemented, the implementation team provides constant monitoring, mentoring and other forms of support to ensure its smooth running. Checklists, classroom observations, group discussions, and meetings and discussions with teachers, learners and parents, are key aspects of the monitoring and mentoring process. Each teacher may complete the Implementation Index; this may also serve as a platform for discussion with the team and mentors about arising issues (see Table 1) (The Index is also presented in Appendix 3). The school community is kept regularly informed on how the implementation is going on, with success stories shared and celebrated throughout the whole community. The monitoring and mentoring process also helps to identify emerging problems which

might threaten the success of the initiative and to enable action to resolve such problems as soon as they appear. Amongst others, the team may have to deal with such issues as limited or lack of resources, resistance or lack of commitment by particular members of staff or parents, and lack of consistency in the implementation.

Table 1: *Implementation Index for the Teacher*

Have you attended a training course on the use of <i>RESCUR Surfing The Waves</i> in the classroom?
Have you read carefully the guidelines in this Guide?
Is enough time being dedicated to do the activities as suggested in this Guide?
Are you adapting the level of the activity (basic/advanced) to the needs of learners in your classroom?
Are you making use of the resources provided for the activities?
<p>Are you following the SAFE approach in the implementation of the curriculum? Do program activities lead to the development of student skills? (Sequence)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › are you using active approaches to teach the skills? (Active) › do you follow a scheduled, regular time throughout the school year (Focused) › do you aim at teaching specific resilience skills rather than general positive development? (Explicit)
Are you adapting the curriculum to the learners' needs and interests, including developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive activities and resources?
Are you implementing the curriculum faithfully as instructed?
Do you keep regular record of learners' progress, strengths and difficulties in the competences they are learning?
Do you regularly encourage learners to reflect on and monitor their own learning?
Do you complete the assessment checklists at the end of each theme?
Do you ask the primary school learners to complete the self-assessment checklists at the end of each theme?
Do you provide learners with opportunity to practice the skills being learnt in their daily classroom life and outside such as during play?
Do you encourage learners to use the resilience competences in challenging or demanding situations, such as learning difficulties, relationship problems, exam time and transitions?
Are you regularly implementing the take-home activities?
Do you keep parents informed about the activities taking place at school and how they can reinforce the activities through the Parents' Guide?
Are you infusing the curriculum into the other curricular areas?
Do you seek to reinforce the resilience competences in your daily practice, such as pedagogy, use of resources, classroom management, and relationships with your students?
Do you model positive resilience skills in your daily practice in the classroom?
Do you link the curriculum to the whole school activities in resilience building?

One of the main issues in implementation is to what extent it is to be faithful to the original programme. This curriculum has been developed for early years and primary schools, and in its development, the authors sought to be sensitive to the social, cultural and economic realities of twenty first century European children. Moreover, the six other editions of the curriculum (Croatian, Greek, Italian, Maltese, Portuguese, and Swedish), have been slightly modified to reflect the particular contexts in those countries. A recent study on resilience across three European countries where RESCUR Surfing the Waves has been implemented (Miljević-Ridički, et al., 2020) concluded that whilst there is a scope for such a Europe-wide resilience curriculum, there are also some differences which justify the tailoring of the programme to local conditions and specific cultural dimensions. Implementing schools and teachers, therefore, may find that the curriculum still requires some adaptation to make it more meaningful and relevant to their particular contexts. Adaptation may take place through a collaborative exercise led by the implementation team and involving staff, learners, parents and other stakeholders, so as to identify the particular needs of the school community and suggest any adaptations accordingly. Modifications may include adapting the material, resources, language, stories, and activities according to the social, cultural and linguistic culture of the learners. There may be also some adaptation of the steps of the activities while retaining their main structure, as well as simplification of some of the material or activities. Miljevic et al (2020) suggest that the teachers may be best placed to decide which themes to work with according to the themes' relevance to their particular groups.

At the same time, however, schools need to retain the integrity of the curriculum in order to ensure and maximise its effectiveness potential. Any adaption thus needs to be made in the light of the framework, principles, pedagogy, assessment, and implementation guidelines provided in this Guide and the activities. The Implementation Index serves as a guide for classroom teachers and schools to ensure that the implementation remains faithful to the key principles, objectives, and structure of the curriculum. This is necessary for the curriculum to achieve the expected outcomes; 'too much tailoring to local needs and circumstances can lead to dilution and confusion' (Weare, 2010, p. 11). Lack of structure and consistency in implementation, such as teachers using only some activities or parts of the curriculum or using the curriculum only for a short period of time rather than throughout the year, is set to lead to ineffectiveness in terms of learner outcomes (Humphrey et al., 2010).

Evaluation

The monitoring of the implementation provides useful feedback on how it is proceeding, including whether the curriculum is being implemented by all concerned as planned, and helps the school to make any necessary adaptations and improvements. An action research evaluation may be held at key stages of the implementation, such as upon the completion of one theme, with feedback sought from all partners. The implementation team may devise brief questionnaires for school staff, learners and parents, exploring both the implementation process itself as well any change in learners' resilience. The teachers' and learners' assessment checklists for that particular theme, may also be used for this purpose. Other relevant available information related to the increase of positive behaviours and decrease of negative ones (e.g. improvement in learning, achievement, school attendance and behaviour, and decrease in bullying, violence, misbehaviour, exclusion and absenteeism), may be collected from those taking part in the implementation as well as from school and other documents. The evaluation will help the school to establish what is working, and identify the strengths of the intervention as well as the areas which need further development. Through an ongoing process of

action and reflection, the school community will be able to improve and develop the intervention as it is actually taking place at the school. The school may also choose to engage in a more rigorous evaluation to assess the impact of the curriculum on learners' behaviour over time, making use of a random controlled trial with pre and post assessment, control group and follow up evaluation.



The magic combination of inspiration, belief and perspiration is essential for those committed to improving students' achievement and their well-being. We know the way; what we need now is the will.

(Elias & Weissberg, 2000, p. 192)



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Appendices

APPENDIX 1

TEACHERS' ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Teachers' Assessment Checklist

Theme 3 Early Years

Name of Learner: _____	0: Not observed / non-applicable 1: Developing 2: Developed 3: Consolidated
Date completed: _____	

Instructions: Complete the checklist for each learner at the end of *Theme 3 Developing a Growth Mindset*

3 DEVELOPING A GROWTH MINDSET

3.1 POSITIVE AND OPTIMISTIC THINKING

Level 0, 1, 2 or 3

3.1.1 Positive and negative thinking

3.1.1.B¹. The learner is able to recognize that one can look at the bright side or at the dark side of life

3.1.1.A. The learner is able to distinguish how bright side thinkers and dark side thinkers might react to challenges

3.1.2 It's good to think positive!

3.1.2.B. The learner is able to recognize that bright side thinking can help us feel better

3.1.2.A. The learner is able to describe how one feels after looking at the good bits

3.1.3. Challenging negative thoughts

3.1.3.B. The learner is able to identify one good thing in himself/herself that helps him/her feel better in a bad time

3.1.3.A. The learner is able to describe a positive statement that challenges his/her negative thoughts

3.2 POSITIVE EMOTIONS

3.2.1. Using hope to promote growth and wellbeing

3.2.1.B. The learner is able to recognize that bad times are usually followed by better times

3.2.1.A. The learner is able to identify new goals to make a bad time get better

¹ B = Basic level; A = Advanced level

3.2.2. Using happiness to promote growth and wellbeing

3.2.2.B. The learner is able to describe a time when he/she felt happy	
3.2.2.A. The learner is able to identify an activity or a person that makes him/her happy	

3.2.3. Using self-compassion to promote growth and wellbeing

3.2.3.B. The learner is able to identify positive things in himself/herself	
3.2.3.A. The learner is able to describe how s/he comfort him/herself when experiencing negative feelings	

Learner's strengths:



Learner's needs:

Targets for improvement:

APPENDIX 2













LEARNERS' SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Learners' Self Assessment Checklist Theme 3 Late Primary













Name of Learner: _____	 No  Sometimes  Yes
Date completed: _____	

DEVELOPING A GROWTH MINDSET - POSITIVE AND OPTIMISTIC THINKING













Positive and negative thinking

Please tick the face that best describes you	I can do it	I like to do it
I can break down a bright side thought into three parts	  	  
I can change a dark side thought into a bright side thought	  	  

It's good to think positive!













I can identify which feelings and actions can follow a bright side thought	  	  
I can complete a thoughts → feelings → actions sequence	  	  

Challenging negative thoughts













I can identify one negative thought and one positive statement that goes against it	  	  
I can identify three positive self-affirmations	  	  

DEVELOPING A GROWTH MINDSET - POSITIVE EMOTIONS













Using hope to promote growth and wellbeing

I can adopt a hopeful mindset when setting a personal goal	  	  
I can adopt a hopeful mindset when thinking about the future	  	  

Using happiness to promote growth and wellbeing

I can use the flipping the feeling strategy to change bad feelings into good ones	  	  
I can identify a person, place, object, or event that makes me happy	  	  

Using self-compassion to promote growth and wellbeing

I can identify strategies which can help me to feel good I feel upset	  	  
I can use positive statements about myself when feeling upset	  	  

I enjoyed learning about.....

I would like to improve.....

APPENDIX 3

IMPLEMENTATION INDEX

Implementation Index

Please tick as appropriate	Tick and comments
Have you attended a training course on the use of <i>RESCUR Surfing The Waves</i> in the classroom?	
Have you read carefully the guidelines in this Guide?	
Is enough time being dedicated to do the activities as suggested in this Guide?	
Are you adapting the level of the activity (basic/advanced) to the needs of learners in your classroom?	
Are you making use of the resources provided for the activities?	
<p>Are you following the SAFE approach in the implementation of the curriculum?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o do activities lead to the development of student skills? (Sequence) o are you using active approaches to teach the skills? (Active) o do you follow a scheduled, regular time throughout the school year (Focused) o do you aim at teaching specific resilience skills rather than general positive development? (Explicit), 	
Are you adapting the curriculum to the learners' needs and interests, including developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive activities and resources?	
Are you implementing the curriculum faithfully as instructed?	
Do you keep regular record of learners' progress, strengths and difficulties in the skills they are learning?	

Do you regularly encourage learners to reflect on and monitor their own learning?	
Do you complete the assessment checklists at the end of each theme?	
Do you ask the primary school learners to complete the self-assessment checklists at the end of each theme?	
Do you provide learners with opportunity to practice the taught competences in their daily classroom life and outside such as during play?	
Do you encourage learners to use the resilience competences in challenging or demanding situations, such as learning difficulties, relationship problems, exam time and transitions?	
Are you regularly implementing the extended activities suggested in the curriculum?	
Are you regularly implementing the take home activities?	
Do you keep parents informed about the activities taking place at school and how they can reinforce the activities through the Parents' Guide?	
Are you infusing the curriculum into the other curricular areas such as literacy, numeracy, science education and creativity?	
Do you seek to reinforce the resilience competences in your daily practice, such as pedagogy, use of resources, classroom management, and relationships with your students?	
Do you model positive resilience competences in your daily practice in the classroom?	
Do you link the curriculum to the whole school activities in resilience building?	

APPENDIX 4

FINGER PUPPETS OF SHERLOCK AND ZELDA



Puppets created by

- Sora
- Alka
- Doris
- Ana Marija
- Fata
- Marija
- Kristina
- Marijita
- Yella
- Anja

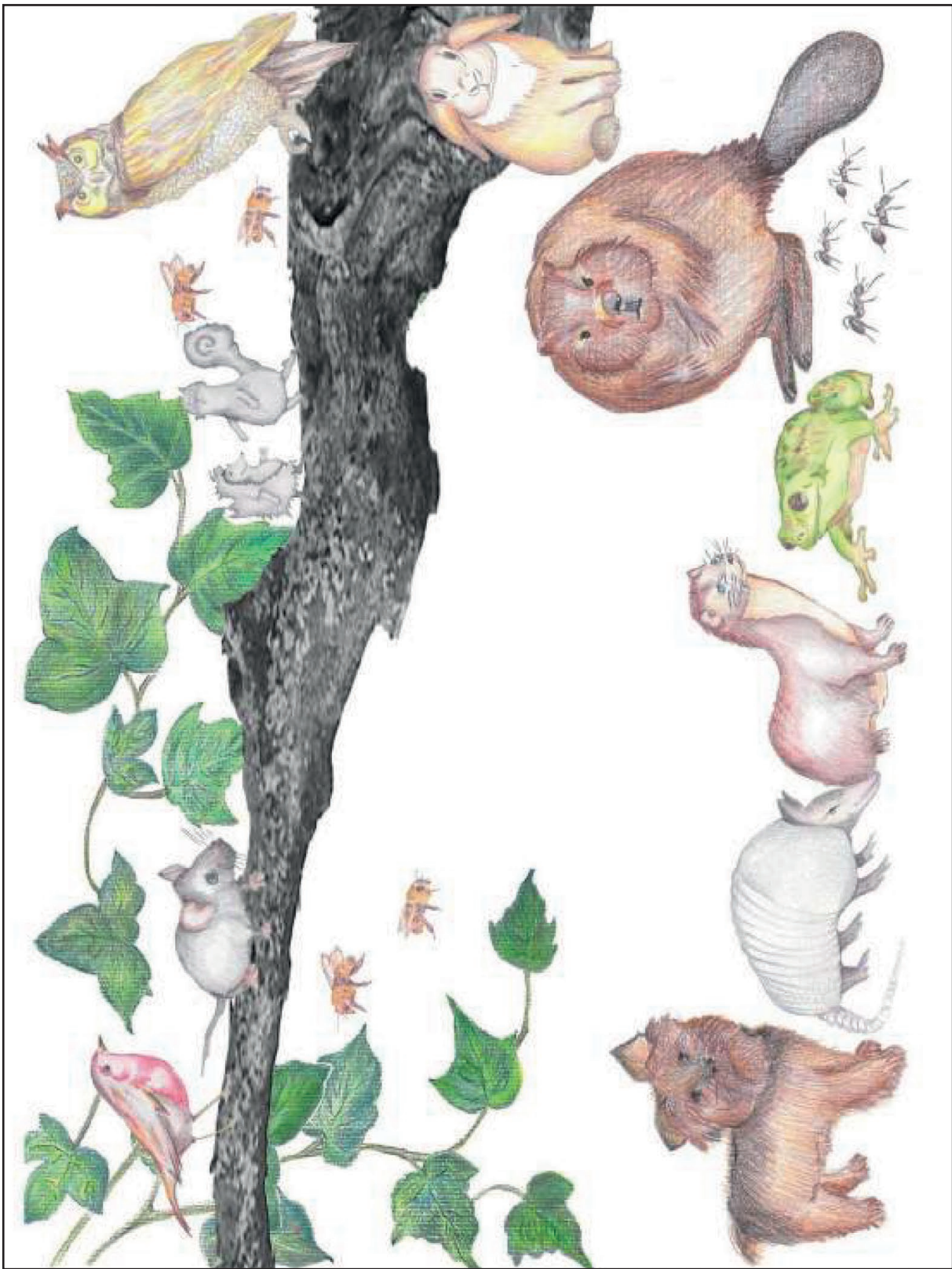
Sherlock & Zelda

finger puppets

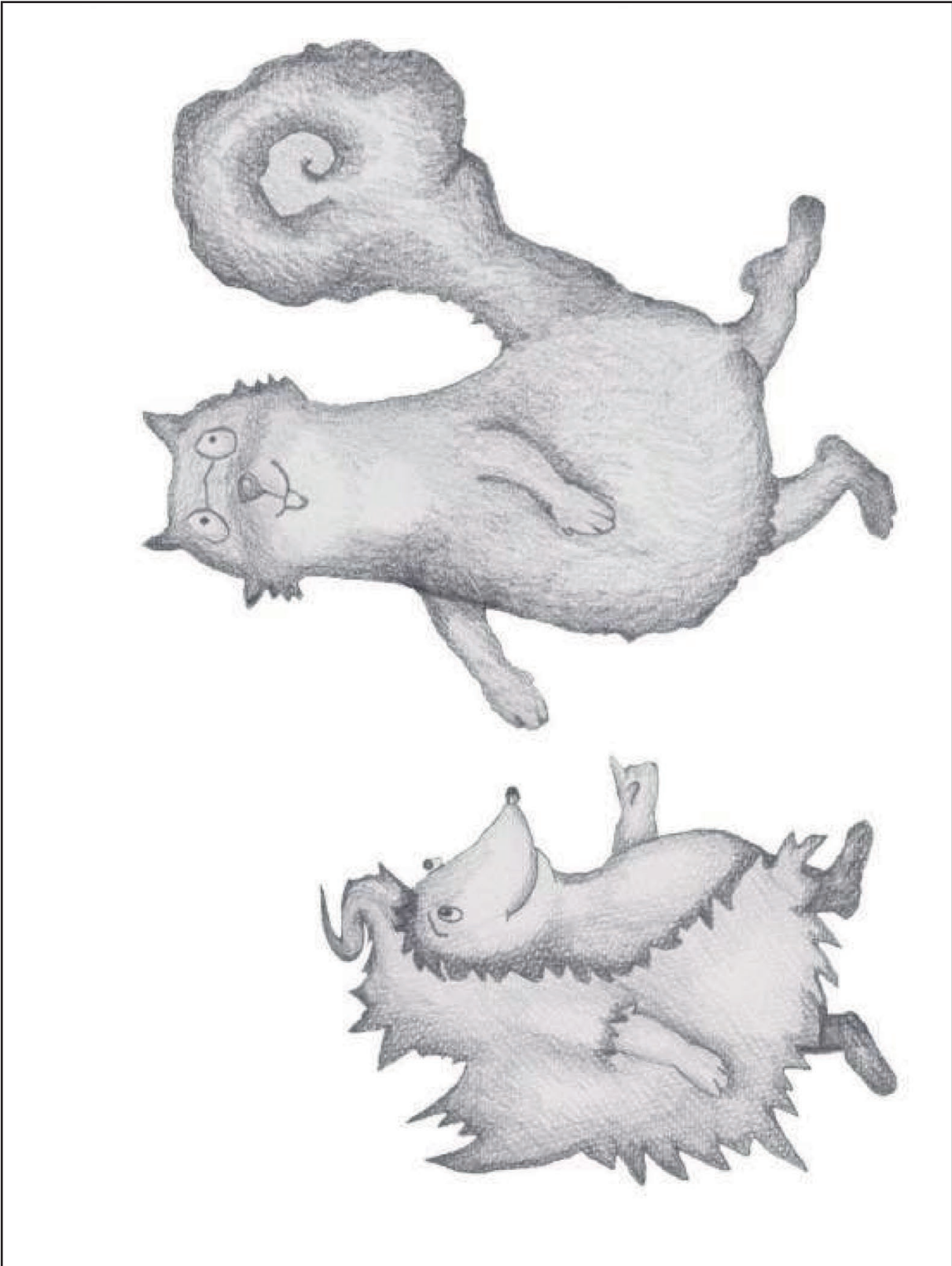


You can make beautiful finger puppets of Sherlock and Zelda using different materials

APPENDIX 5
SAMPLE OF THE STORIES'
ANIMAL CARDS

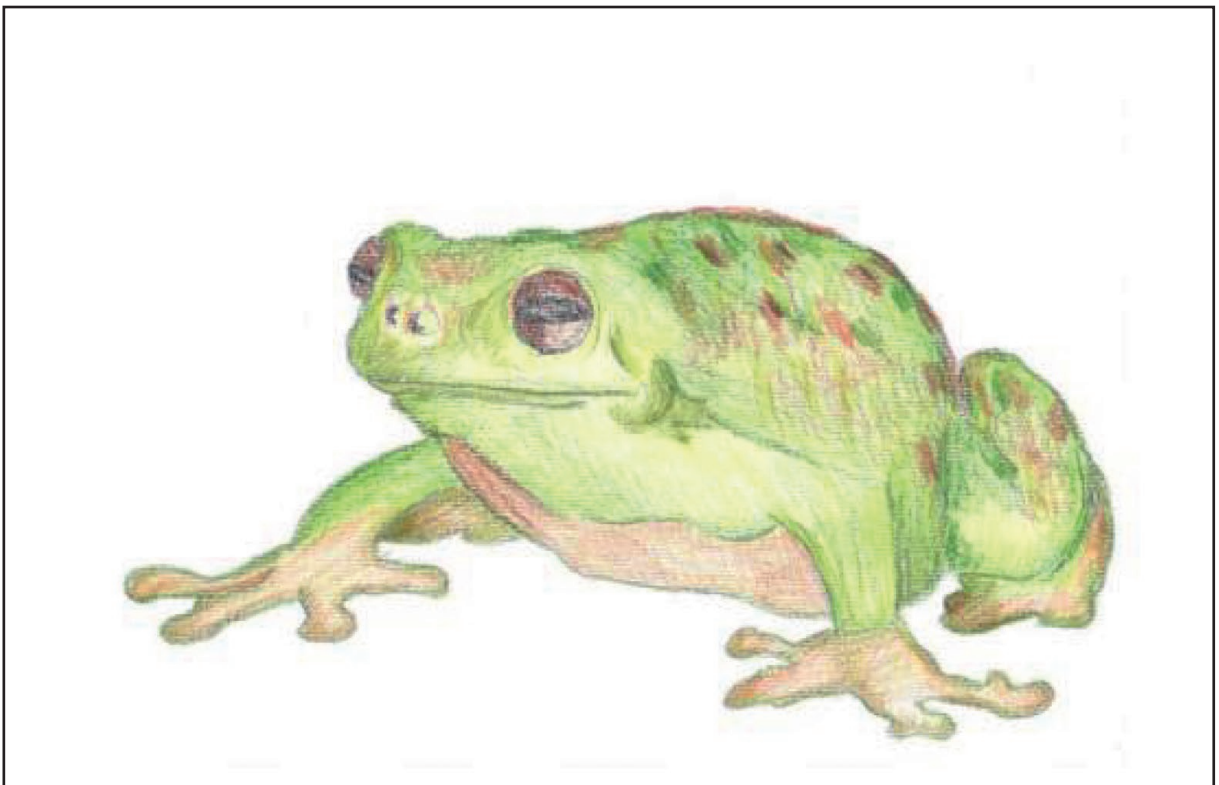
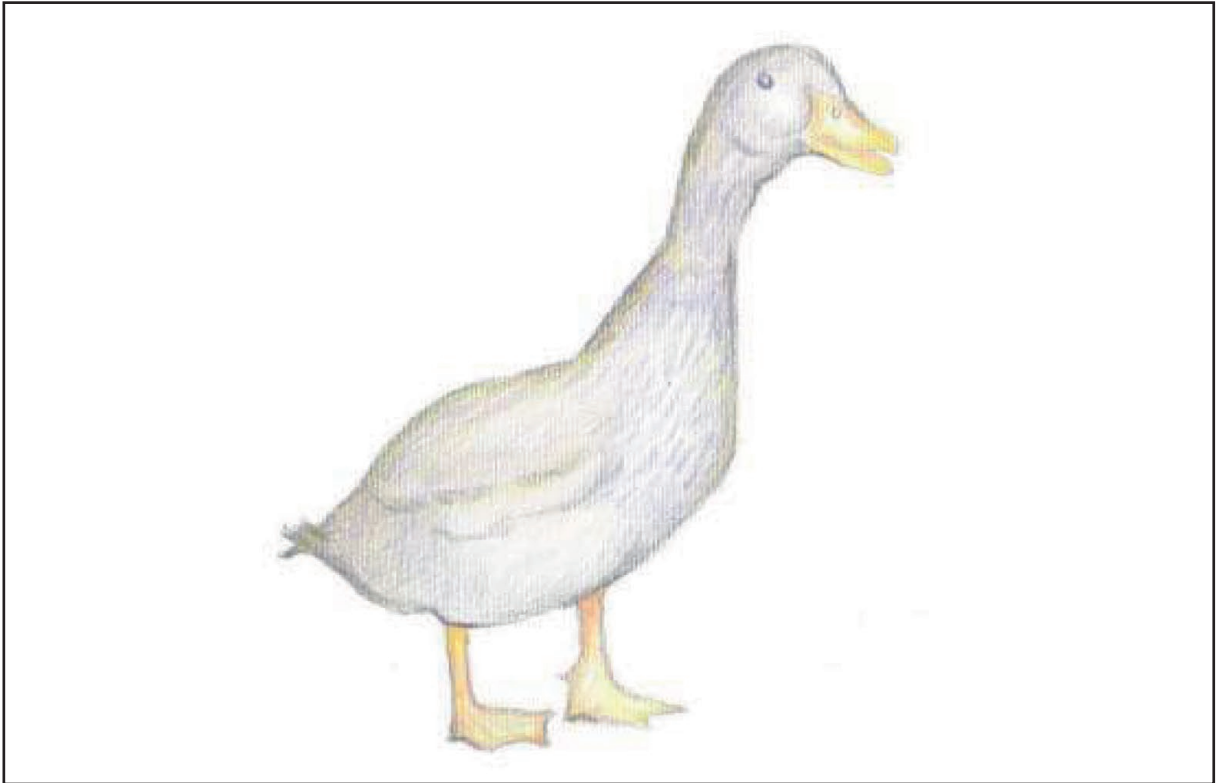






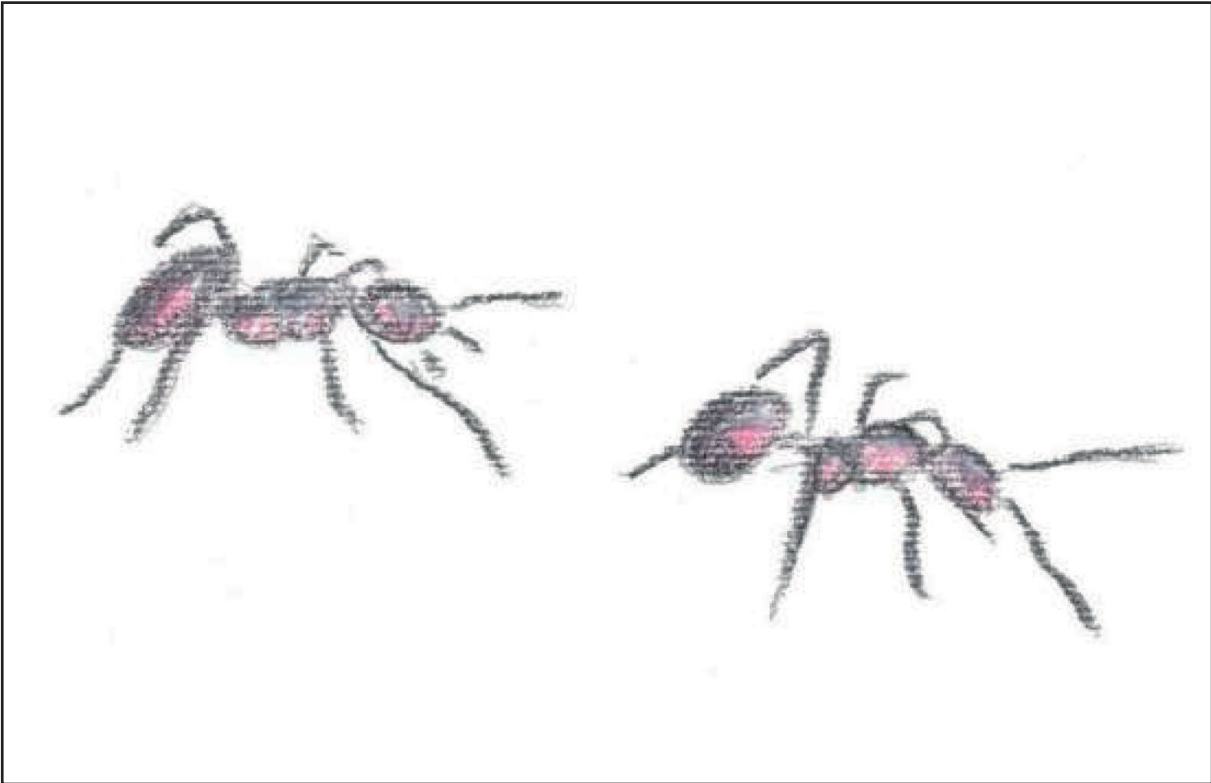






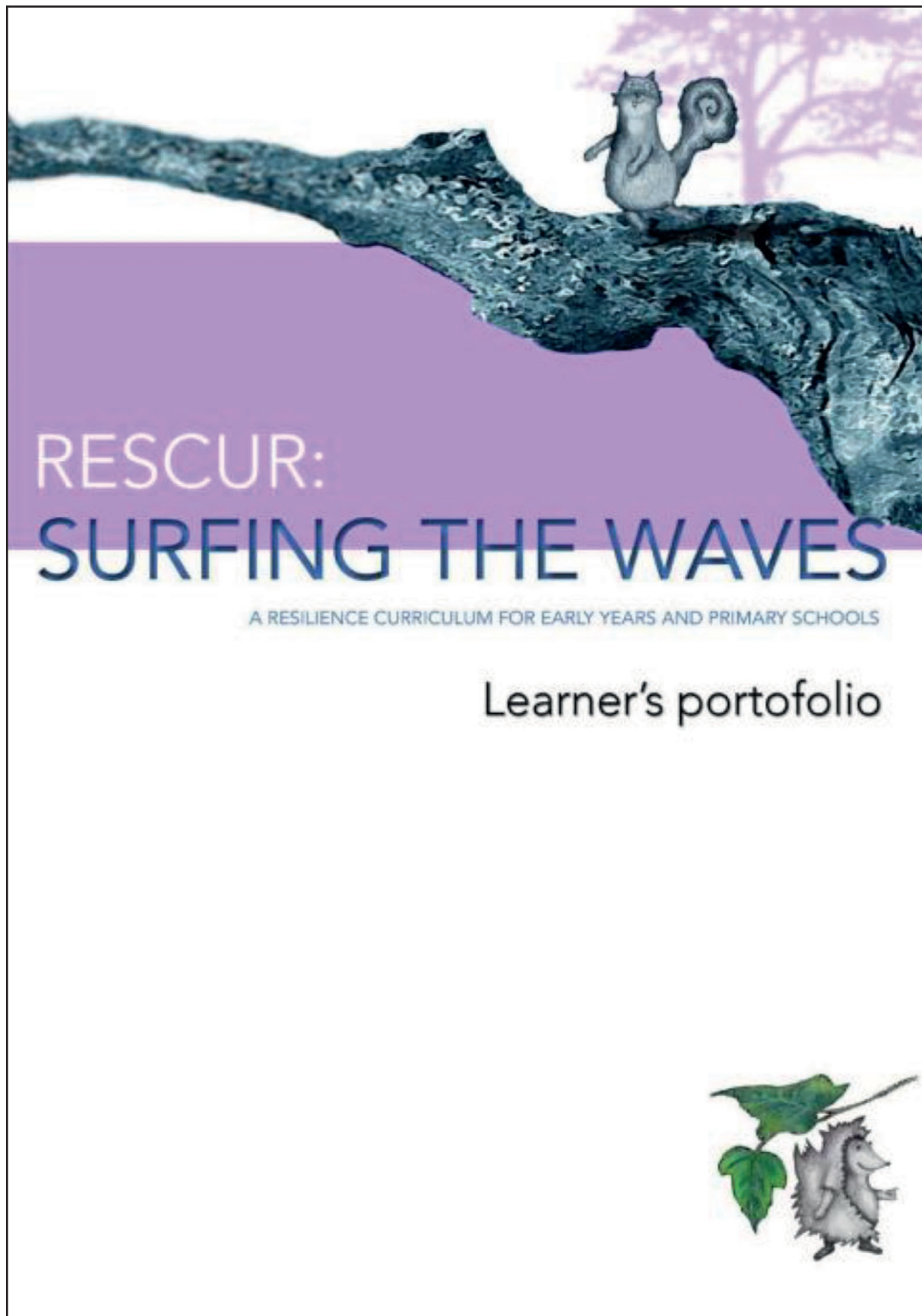






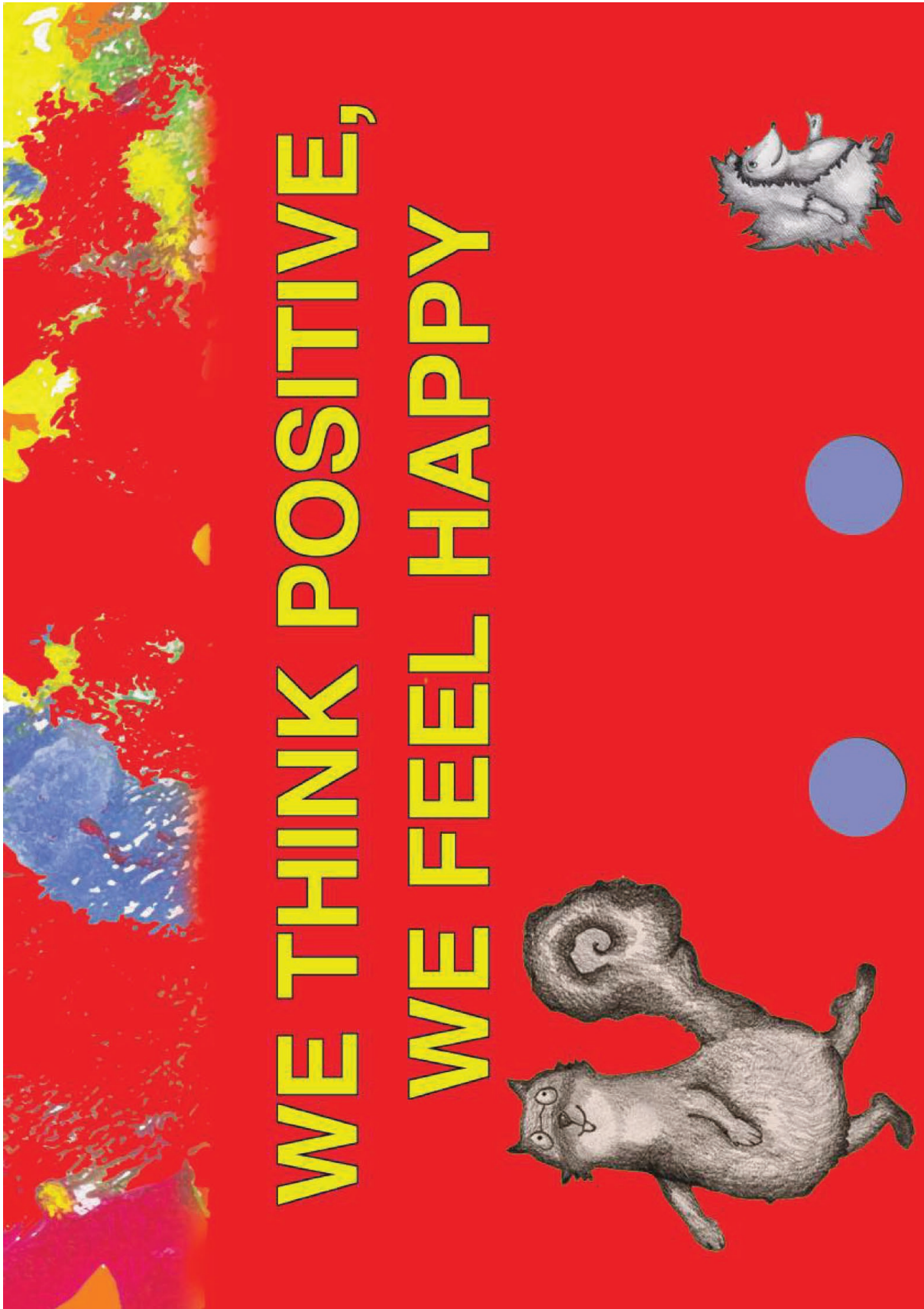
APPENDIX 6

LEARNER'S PORTFOLIO



APPENDIX 7

SAMPLE POSTER OF THEMES



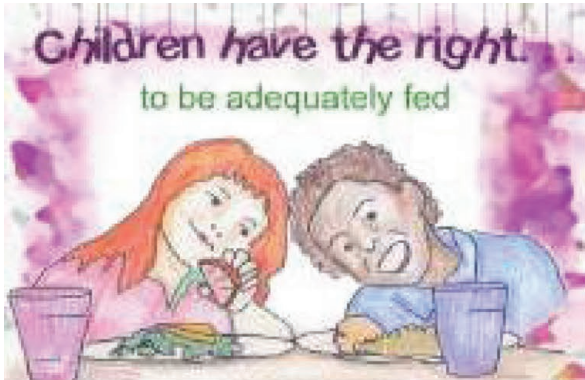
APPENDIX 8

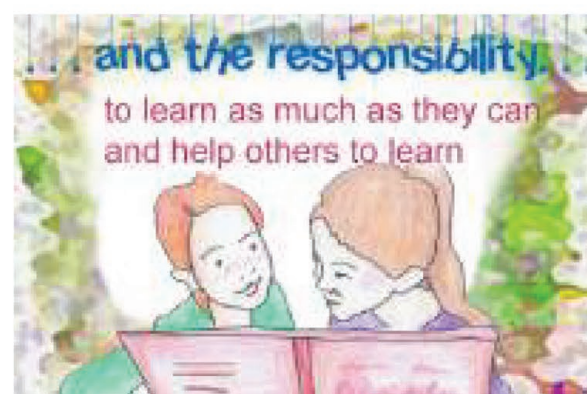
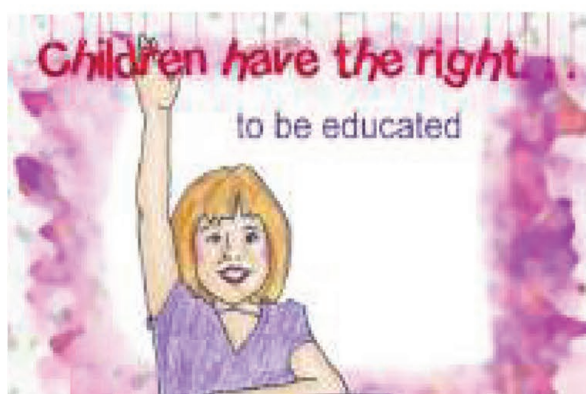
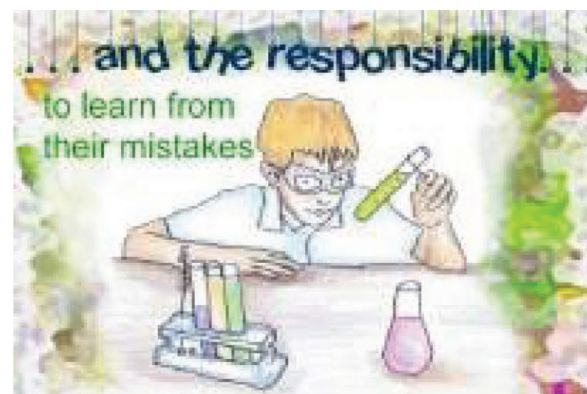
CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Convention on the Rights of the Child

<p>Article 1: Everyone under 18 has these rights.</p> <p>Article 2: All children have these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.</p> <p>Article 3: All adults should do what is best for you. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children.</p> <p>Article 4: The government has a responsibility to make sure your rights are protected. They must help your family to protect your rights and create an environment where you can grow and reach your potential.</p> <p>Article 5: Your family has the responsibility to help you learn to exercise your rights, and to ensure that your rights are protected.</p> <p>Article 6: You have the right to be alive.</p>	<p>Article 7: You have the right to a name, and this should be officially recognised by the government. You have the right to a nationality (to belong to a country).</p> <p>Article 8: You have the right to an identity – an official record of who you are. No one should take this away from you.</p> <p>Article 9: You have the right to live with your parent(s), unless it is bad for you. You have the right to live with a family who cares for you.</p> <p>Article 10: If you live in a different country than your parents do, you have the right to be together in the same place.</p> <p>Article 11: You have the right to be protected from kidnapping.</p> <p>Article 12: You have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.</p> <p>Article 13: You have the right to find out things and share what you think with others, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms or offends other people.</p>	<p>Article 14: You have the right to choose your own religion and beliefs. Your parents should help you decide what is right and wrong, and what is best for you.</p> <p>Article 15: You have the right to choose your own friends and join or set up groups, as long as it isn't harmful to others.</p> <p>Article 16: You have the right to privacy.</p> <p>Article 17: You have the right to get information that is important to your well-being, from radio, newspaper, books, computers and other sources. Adults should make sure that the information you are getting is not harmful, and help you find and understand the information you need.</p> <p>Article 18: You have the right to be raised by your parent(s) if possible.</p> <p>Article 19: You have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body or mind.</p> <p>Article 20: You have the right to special care and help if you cannot live with your parents.</p> <p>Article 21: You have the right to care and protection if you are adopted or in foster care.</p>
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<p>Article 22: You have the right to special protection and help if you are a refugee (if you have been forced to leave your home and live in another country), as well as all the rights in this Convention.</p> <p>Article 23: You have the right to special education and care if you have a disability, as well as all the rights in this Convention, so that you can live a full life.</p> <p>Article 24: You have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay well.</p> <p>Article 25: If you live in care or in other situations away from home, you have the right to have these living arrangements looked at regularly to see if they are the most appropriate.</p> <p>Article 26: You have the right to help from the government if you are poor or in need.</p> <p>Article 27: You have the right to food, clothing, a safe place to live and to have your basic needs met. You should not be disadvantaged so that you can't do many of the things other kids can do.</p>	<p>Article 28: You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.</p> <p>Article 29: Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.</p> <p>Article 30: You have the right to practice your own culture, language and religion - or any you choose.</p> <p>Minority and indigenous groups need special protection of this right.</p> <p>Article 31: You have the right to play and rest.</p> <p>Article 32: You have the right to protection from work that harms you, and is bad for your health and education. If you work, you have the right to be safe and paid fairly.</p> <p>Article 33: You have the right to protection from harmful drugs and from the drug trade.</p> <p>Article 34: You have the right to be free from sexual abuse.</p>	<p>Article 35: No one is allowed to kidnap or sell you.</p> <p>Article 36: You have the right to protection from any kind of exploitation (being taken advantage of).</p> <p>Article 37: No one is allowed to punish you in a cruel or harmful way.</p> <p>Article 38: You have the right to protection and freedom from war. Children under 15 cannot be forced to go into the army or take part in war.</p> <p>Article 39: You have the right to help if you've been hurt, neglected or badly treated.</p> <p>Article 40: You have the right to legal help and fair treatment in the justice system that respects your rights.</p> <p>Article 41: If the laws of your country provide better protection of your rights than the articles in this Convention, those laws should apply.</p> <p>Article 42: You have the right to know your rights! Adults should know about these rights and help you learn about them, too.</p>
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APPENDIX 9
SCHOOLS WHICH PARTICIPATED
IN THE PILOTING OF THE
CURRICULUM

List of schools which participated in the piloting of the curriculum

Croatia

Kindergarten "Različak", Zagreb, Petrinjska 31/2

Kindergarten Varaždin, Varaždin, Dravska 1

IV. Primary School Varaždin, Varaždin, A. M. Reljkovića 36

Primary School "Dr. Ivan Merz", Zagreb, Račkoga 4

Greece

Perfection of Rethimno, Crete: 8th Elementary school of Rethimo, Roussospiti Elementary School, 2nd Preschool of Atsipopoulo, 16th Elementary school of Rethimno, Elementary school of Fourfoura, Elementary school Alfa Milopotamou, Preschool Sgourokefalio, Elementary school of Asi Gonia Rethimnou, Preschool of Agia Galini Rethimnou

Perfection of Hrakleio, Crete: 38th Preschool of Hrakleio, Tefeliou Preschool Hrakleio, 31st Elementary school of Hrakleio, Preschool of 10 Saints, Hrakleio, 24th Preschool of Hrakleio, 9th Elementary School of Hrakleio, 29th Preschool of Hrakleio, 1st Elementary school Agias Marinas Hrakleio, 30th Preschool of Hrakleio, 10th Preschool of Hrakleio, 25th Preschool of Hrakleio, 2nd Preschool Boutes Hrakleiou, 3rd preschool of Arkaloxori, 1st Preschool of Zakros, Elementary school of Kastelli Pediados, 36th preschool of Hrakleio, Preschool of Skalani Hrakleiou, 2nd Elementary school of Archanes Hrakleiou, 36th Elementary school of Hrakleio,

Perfection of Agios Nikolaos, Crete: 2nd Elementary School Ierapetras, 2nd Preschool Neapolis Lasithiou.

Italy

Istituto Comprensivo Angelini e Scuola primaria Speciale Dosso Verde, Pavia

Scuola Secondaria di primo grado F. Casorati e Scuola primaria "Montebolone", Pavia Scuola dell'infanzia "G. Vaccari", Pavia

Istituto Comprensivo di "Via Acerbi" – Scuola d'infanzia L'Aquilone, Pavia Scuola dell'Infanzia comunale "8 Marzo", Pavia

Istituto Comprensivo di via Scopoli – Scuola primaria "De Amicis" e Scuola primaria "Gabelli", Pavia Scuola primaria paritaria "Maddalena di Canossa", Pavia

Istituto Comprensivo di Certosa di Pavia - Certosa di Pavia (PV)

Istituto Comprensivo di Rivanazzano Terme (PV) - Scuola Primaria Statale di Retorbido (PV) – Scuola dell'infanzia "Liedi" di Rivanazzano Terme (PV) – Scuola Primaria di Godiasco (PV) - Scuola d'infanzia "Diviani – Salice Terme (PV) - Scuola dell'infanzia "Negrotto Cambiaso" Codevilla (PV)

Istituto Comprensivo di Piazza Vittorio Veneto - Scuola primaria "Don Milani" - Scuola primaria "Regina Margherita" - Vigevano (PV) -

Istituto Comprensivo di Bereguardo (PV) – Scuola primaria di Bereguardo (PV) e Scuola primaria di Vellezzo Bellini (PV)

Istituto Comprensivo di Siziano (PV) – Scuola primaria di Siziano (PV) Istituto Comprensivo di Garlasco (PV) – Scuola primaria di Dorno (PV)

Istituto comprensivo di Stradella (PV) - Scuola dell'infanzia di Portalbera (PV)

Istituto Comprensivo di Villanterio (PV) - Scuola primaria di Gerenzago (PV) - Scuola primaria di Vistarino (PV)

Istituto Comprensivo Statale di Mortara (PV) – scuola primaria di Mortara (PV) Scuola primaria "D'Acquisto" di San Donato Milanese (MI)

Malta

St Margaret College- Żabbar Primary School A
St Margaret College -Żabbar Primary School B
St Margaret College - Cospicua Primary School
St Margaret College - Kalkara Primary School
St Margaret College - Xgħajra Primary School

Portugal

Agrupamento de escolas Dr. Azevedo Neves
Agrupamento de escolas Dr. Ruy Luis Gomes
Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Almada
Casa das Cores

Sweden

Förskolan Bispgården
Hansåkerskolan
Himlavalvets förskola
Humlans förskola (Mosippan)
Järåskolan
Kullsta skola
Skolbackens förskola
Smultronets förskola



I learned that obstacles can become an opportunity. I learned how to behave in a calm way without becoming angry with others. I liked this program because we learned how to think in a positive way.

Primary school students



Week after week the children came expecting to continue where Zelda and Sherlock left off! The lessons went down very well. Fun and exciting. Interesting to see how the students 'grew'. There is not a golden recipe to build resilience in children, but I am sure that this curriculum is a very good way to do so.

Classroom teachers



RESCUR is grounded in a wealth of knowledge from practitioners and researchers. The materials are designed carefully to appeal to the inner world of the child, through narrative, music, poetry, drama and art, using varied and imaginative methods such as mindfulness, story-telling, drawings, cartoons, a wide range of activities, role plays, take-home exercises, and, best of all, the delightful puppet characters, Zelda and Sherlock. There are many opportunities for the children to explore solutions to everyday difficulties and to discuss and debate the complex social, moral and ethical issues that they will all encounter in their lives. They are also presented with outstanding role models to demonstrate the power of resilience in the face of adversity.

Prof. Helen Cowie, Surrey University, UK



RESCUR is a very promising and certainly imperative response to the social, cultural and economic challenges faced by many European children in our days. Through this curriculum, students will receive prevention and early intervention that promote positive behaviors, provide academic enrichment, and underline the importance of staying in school and getting quality education. For those at greatest risk for social and academic failure, RESCUR provides a safety net to keep these students from falling through the cracks.

Prof. Maria Poulou, University of Patras, Greece



Finally, a comprehensive approach to nurturing resilience among elementary school children that is culturally sensitive and useful across a large number of settings. After extensive field trials, the modules in RESCUR promise to help all children develop the skills they need to cope when problems occur. Even better, RESCUR will be especially useful to children from more disadvantaged backgrounds, giving them the problem solving and social skills they need to develop and sustain a network of care and support.

Prof. Michael Ungar, Dalhousie University, Canada

