



## What is resilience ?

**Resilience refers to a class of phenomena characterized by good outcomes in spite of serious threats to adaptation or development. (Masten, 2001)**

# RESCUR

## An EU Funded Project (2012-2015)

### Objectives

RESCUR is aimed at developing a resilience curriculum for early and primary education in Europe through the intercultural and transnational collaboration among the partner institutions.



## RESCUR : 3-year programme

- 1<sup>st</sup> year: Developed a universal resilience curriculum for the early years and primary school education.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> year: Curriculum was piloted in a number of schools in each country
- 3<sup>rd</sup> year: Curriculum is being revised and published in soft and hard copies in the 6 languages of the consortium and in English.

## General Aim

*“Our vision is to  
transform lives  
through education  
...”*

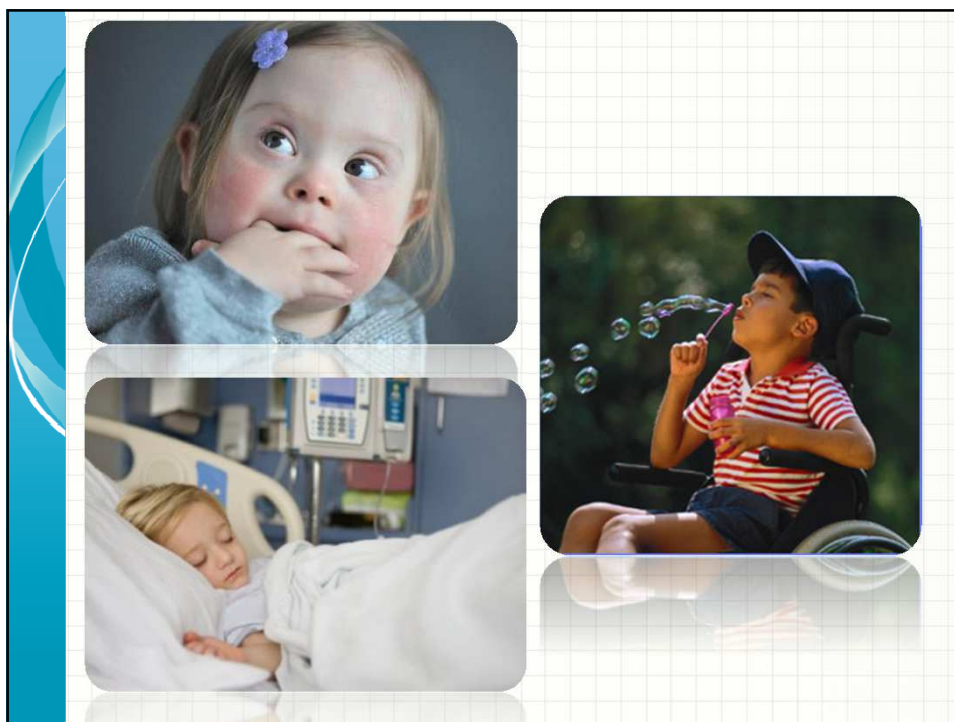
(World Education Forum, May  
2015)



## Risk & Adversity

- Socio-economic disadvantage,
  - Individual educational needs,
  - Cultural mismatch,
  - Family instability,
  - Negative early experiences
- e.g.
- children living in poverty,
  - children from minority ethnic groups and refugee status,
  - Roma children,
  - children with disability and
  - gifted children





## Resilience

Children can be protected from the potential risks posed by adverse environments and can be enabled to acquire the skills for academic success and socio-emotional growth and wellbeing.



## **Defining resilience: Ordinary magic**

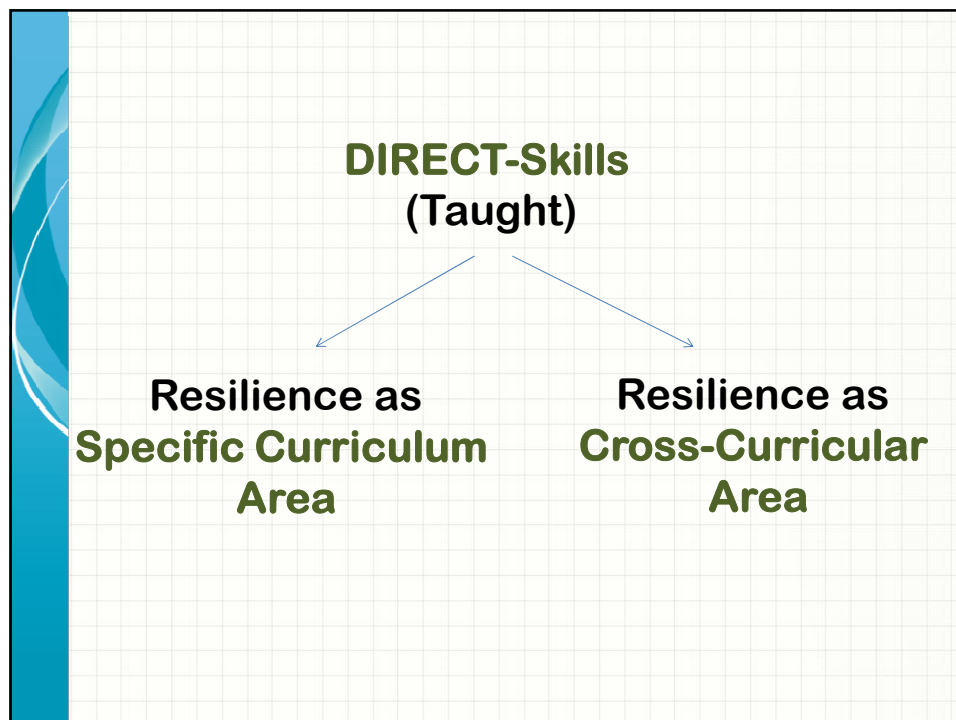
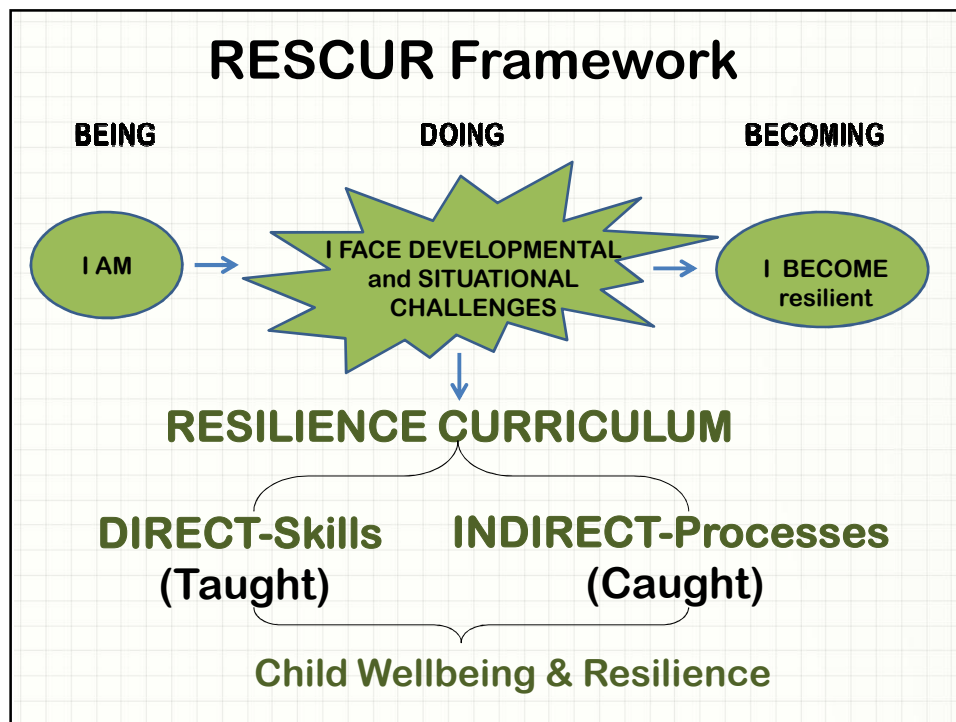
**“Resilience does not come from rare and special qualities, but from the everyday magic of ordinary, normative human resources in the minds, brains, and bodies of children, in their families and relationships, and in their communities.” (Masten, 2001)**

## **Contextual, developmental construct**

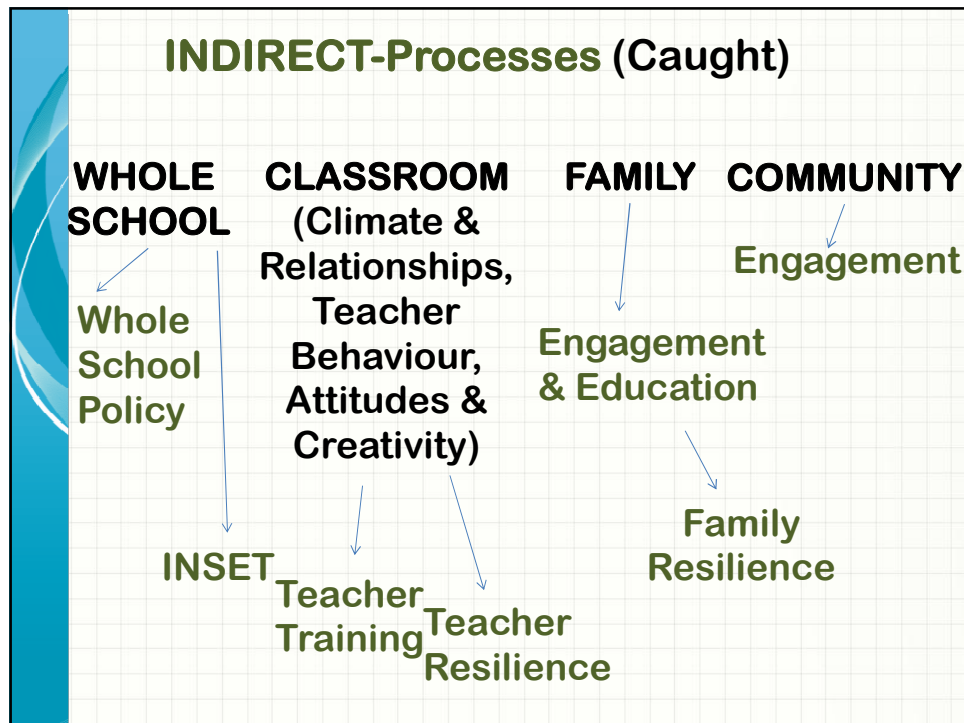
**“... the resilience of a person is always changing and the capacity for adaptation of an individual will be distributed across interacting systems...**

**These include close attachment relationships, reward systems and mastery motivation, intelligence and executive functions, and cultural belief systems and traditions in many forms, including religion.” (Marsten, 2014)**

**If circumstances change, resilience alters (Rutter, 1981)**





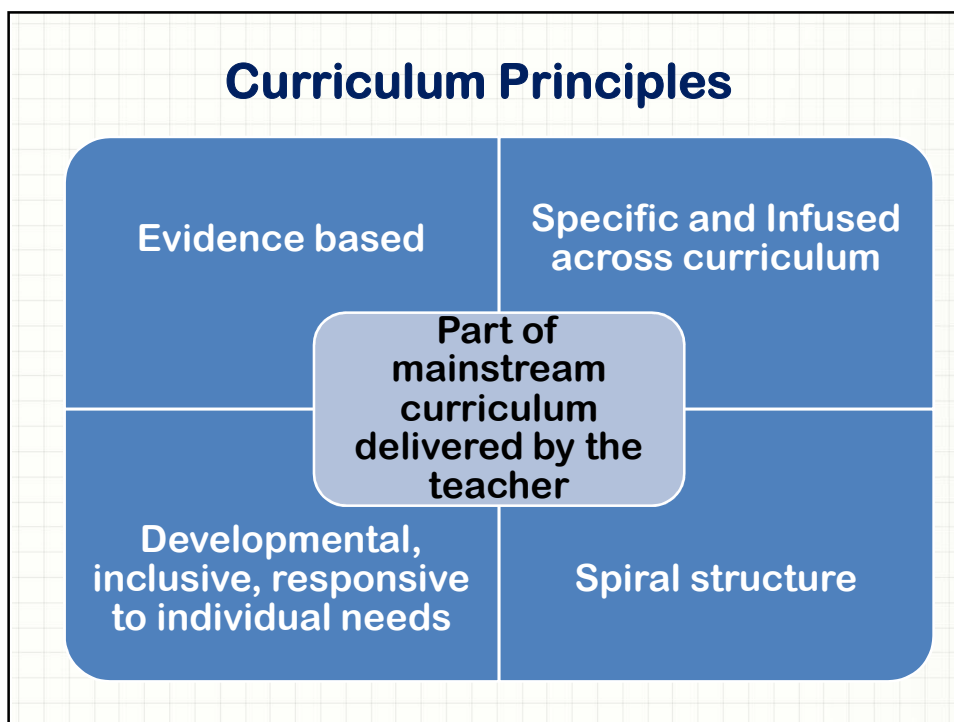


## Indirect – Processes (CAUGHT)

The 'caught' component entails multiple changes in the school culture – psychologists can be important promoters.

The teaching of resilience skills by the classroom teacher (curricular and cross curricular) also impacts teachers' overall practice and leads to a paradigm shift in teaching and learning in the classroom with resilience education embedded in the whole classroom climate.

## Curriculum Principles



## Manuals

- ✓ Three manuals for teachers, including resources and activities around 6 major themes (spiral);
- ✓ Manual for Parents.



## Six Resilience Themes

Identified through review of literature and analysis of socio-economic, educational, and cultural needs of children and young people:



Developing communication skills



Establishing and maintaining healthy relationships



Developing a growth mindset



Developing self-determination



Building on strengths



Turning challenges into opportunities (tough mindedness)

## Themes and subthemes

1. Developing communication skills
  1. effective communication
  2. assertiveness
2. Establishing and maintaining healthy relationships
  1. healthy relationships
  2. cooperative skills, empathy and moral reasoning
3. Developing a growth mindset
  1. positive and optimistic thinking
  2. positive emotions
4. Developing self determination
  1. problem solving
  2. empowerment and autonomy
5. Building on strengths
  1. positive self-concept and self-esteem
  2. using strengths in academic and social engagement

## Themes and subthemes (cont.)

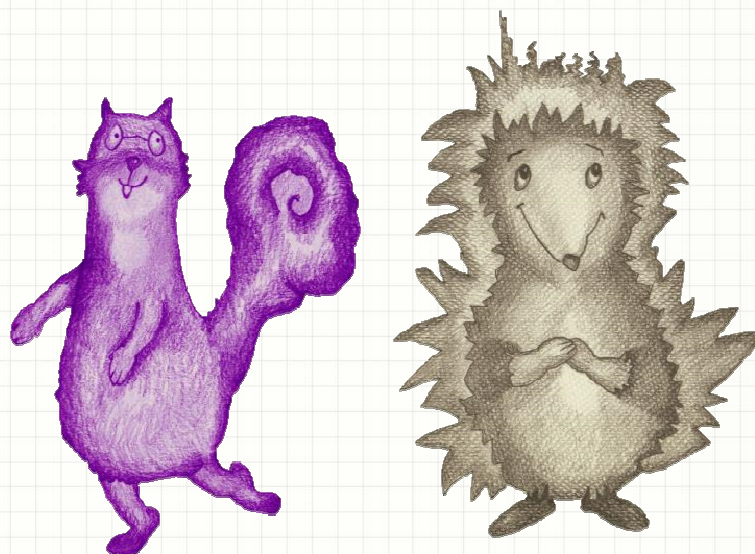
### 6. Turning challenges into opportunities

1. dealing with adversity and setbacks
2. dealing with rejection
3. dealing with loss
4. dealing with family conflict
5. dealing with bullying
6. dealing with change and transition



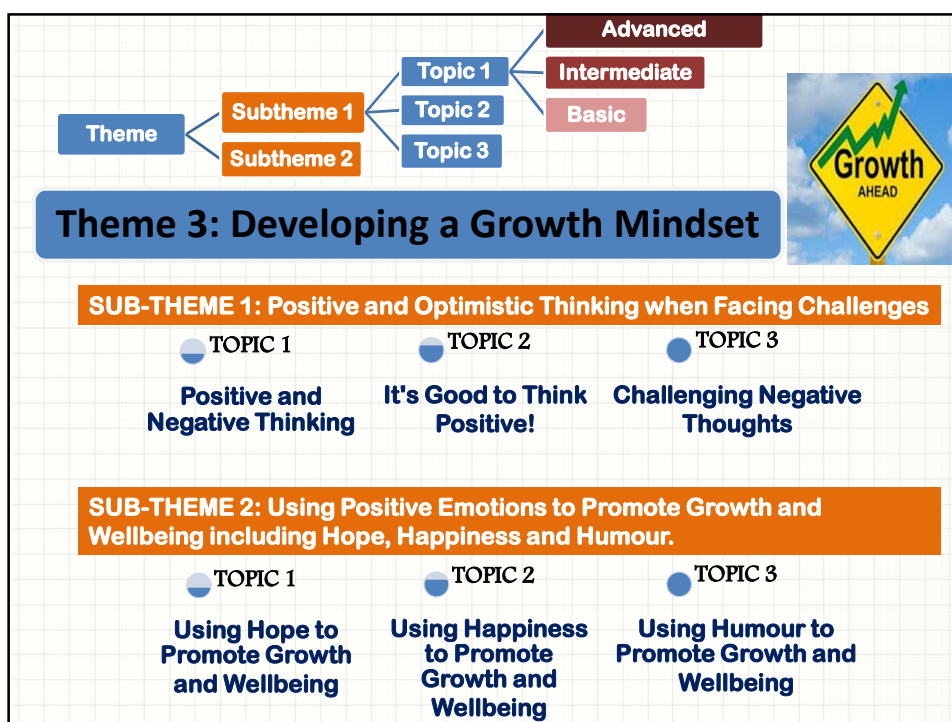
**TOTAL OF 48  
SESSIONS  
PER YEAR**

## STORY-BASED with CURRICULUM MASCOTS



## e.g. Theme 3: Developing a Growth Mindset

- Optimistic thinking and positive mindset when facing life's adversities
- Using positive emotions to promote growth and wellbeing (hope, happiness, humour)





## Session structure

Each session is presented within the following structure:

- mindfulness activity
- learning goal
- learning outcome
- resources to be used in the activity
- story and questions on the story
- practical hands-on activities
- take home activity including handouts for parents

## Resources

- Stories for each theme
- Cloth puppets of the two programme mascots
- Finger puppets of the two programme mascots and other animals used in the stories (early years and early primary manuals)
- Sets of worksheets to be used by the learners during the activities
- Sets of worksheets for parents to be used at home with the children
- Mindfulness exercises and music CD
- Posters on each theme, with a slogan capturing the subject of the theme

## Piloting

- *Participants.* A number of trained early years and primary school teachers in each partner country implemented one specific theme of the curriculum in their classrooms over a six week period.
- 79 early and primary schools,
- 205 classrooms, and
- 2895 students from six European countries (Croatia, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Sweden)
- 199 teachers and 1935 students participated in the evaluation of the implementation.

## Pilot Evaluation

- Classroom teachers kept a reflective weekly diary
- At the end of the implementation, each teacher also completed a classroom assessment checklist
- A number of representative teachers participated in a semi-structured interview or a focus group
- Five of the six partners held learner focus groups, one from each age group
- Finally some partners also carried out observations in class during the implementation.

## Findings

- Most teachers observed a moderate positive change in the learners' behavior related to the theme implemented.
- The great majority of the teachers reported that the learners were very excited, highly engaged and participated actively.
- In general the parents as well found the programme relevant for their children.
- Some teachers also observed a change in the classroom climate, with closer relationships and more collaborative, supportive and pro-social behaviours.
- Some observed that some of the programme language was being used by the learners in the daily classroom practices.
- The sessions were a useful source of personal and professional development for the teachers, helping them to connect with, and better understand their learners.
- But: they argued that the implementation was rather short, and that for it to be effective, the curriculum needs to take place on a regular basis throughout the whole year.
- Changes more apparent in the older learners.

## Useful, relevant and practical curriculum

- Teachers appreciated the well-structured and stepped activities.
- They found the activities meaningful and highly motivating for the learners, particularly the stories, the mascots, the mindfulness activities, the take home activities, and the other resources such as the learner worksheets.
- They also mentioned the experiential and interactive approach, including role plays, discussions, games and drawings, as another positive aspect of the programme.

## What the teachers said

- *After the initial training session I realized that my classroom management philosophy needed to change. Therefore the change of the program started with me. Following the training and the activities, it was 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 learned a lot from my students while implementing this resilience 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 curriculum) worked. Often, the lessons went down very well. Fun and exciting. Interesting to see how the pupils "grew".*
- *Most of them (students) were active. Very active and engaged. They liked the lessons. Great interest in talking about themselves. It got better as we went along.*



**THANKS**

For latest news on project, visit the project website:

<http://www.rescur.eu/>