Promoting Resilience in Early Years &Primary School

A European Perspective

RESCUR
Resilience
Curriculum

RESCUR Project

- Three year EU LLP Comenius Multilateral Project (2012-2015)

- 6 research partners:
  - *University of Malta,* Malta (Coordinator)-Carmel Cefai , Paul Bartolo
  - *University of Crete,* Greece - Anastassios Matsopoulos, Mariza Gavogiannaki
  - *University of Pavia,* Italy - Maria Assunta Zanetti, Roberta Renati, Valeria Cavioni
  - *University of Zagreb,* Croatia - Renata Miljevic-Ridicki, Tea Pavin Ivanec, Marija Saric
  - *Orebro University,* Sweden- Birgitta Kimber, Charli Eriksson
  - *University of Lisbon,* Portugal - Celeste Simoes, Paula Lebre
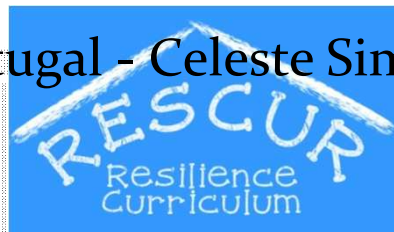
Objectives

- 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, tapping into the resources and expertise of the various partners involved.

First Year

- In the first year the consortium will develop a universal resilience curriculum for the early years and primary school education.

- The curriculum will be also integrated within the mainstream curriculum and taught by the teachers, who will be trained, mentored and provided with the necessary resources.

Curriculum Principles

Spiral approach, with identified key themes straddling across the early and primary school years

Infused in the other content areas of the curriculum as well as in pedagogy, relationships and classroom management

European identity and diversity

tegrated in the mainstream rriculum rather than a bolt n, added activity delivered by outside experts

Evidence based

Developmental and inclusiv being flexible and responsiv to the needs of the individu learner differences, underlin the right of all learners for quality resilience educatio and a commitment toward social justice with awarene of the risk for discriminator practices due to individua educational needs, minorit statuses, and poverty

Search for state-of-the-art service arrangements reflecting the EU agenda for excellence and competitiveness at the global level

rmatively assessed by both e classroom teacher and he students themselves

Resilience Curriculum

Manuals

- The curriculum will consist of three manuals for teachers complete with resources and activities centred around 6 major themes (spiral)

- Manual 1: Early Years (3-5 years)

- Manual 2: Early Primary Years (6-8 years)

- Manual 3 : Late Primary Years (9-11 years)

- There will also be 3 complementary manuals for **Parents**

Second and Third Years

- In the second year, the curriculum will be piloted in a number of schools in each partner country

- In the third year the curriculum will be revised and published in soft and hard copies in the seven languages of the consortium.

Symposium presentations

- *The Curriculum Framework*

- *The Curriculum Themes*

- *The Structure and Design of the Activities*

- *Examples of the Activities*

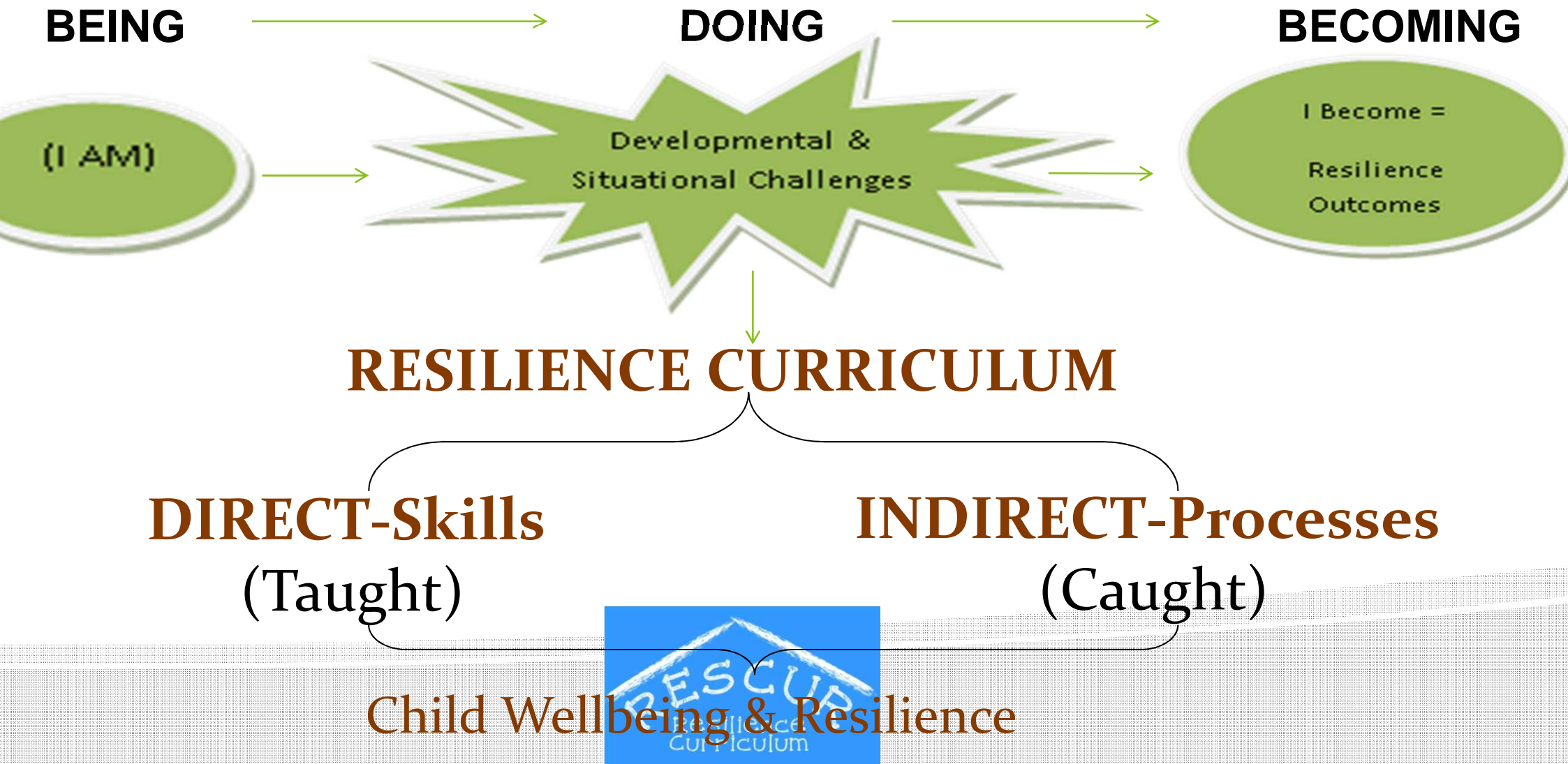- *The Early Years Curriculum*

- *Specific Target Populations*

The RESCUR Curriculum Framework
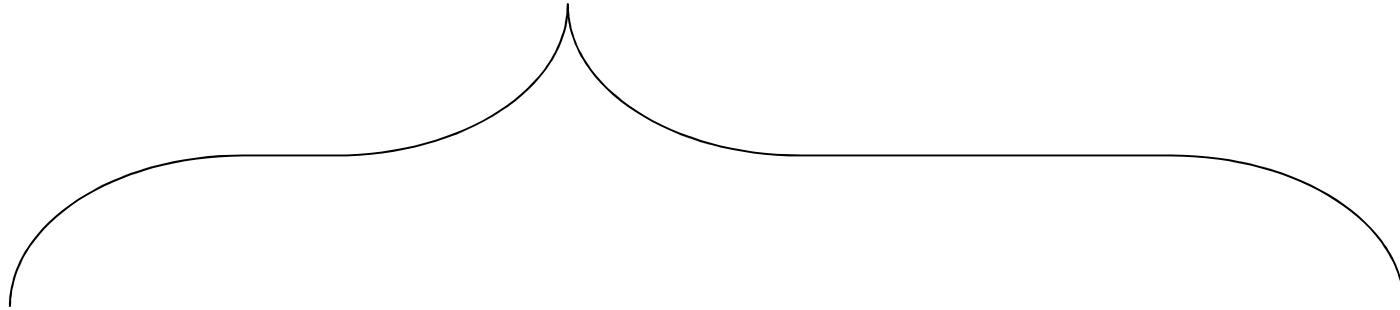
Carmel Cefai and Paul Bartolo

RESCUR Framework
STORYLINE

BEING → **DOING** → **BECOMING**

(I AM)

Developmental & Situational Challenges

I Become = Resilience Outcomes

RESILIENCE CURRICULUM

DIRECT-Skills
(Taught)

INDIRECT-Processes
(Caught)

Child Wellbeing & Resilience

RESILIENCE CURRICULUM
(Increasing Protective & Enabling Factors/ Reducing Risk Factors)

DIRECT-Skills
(Taught)

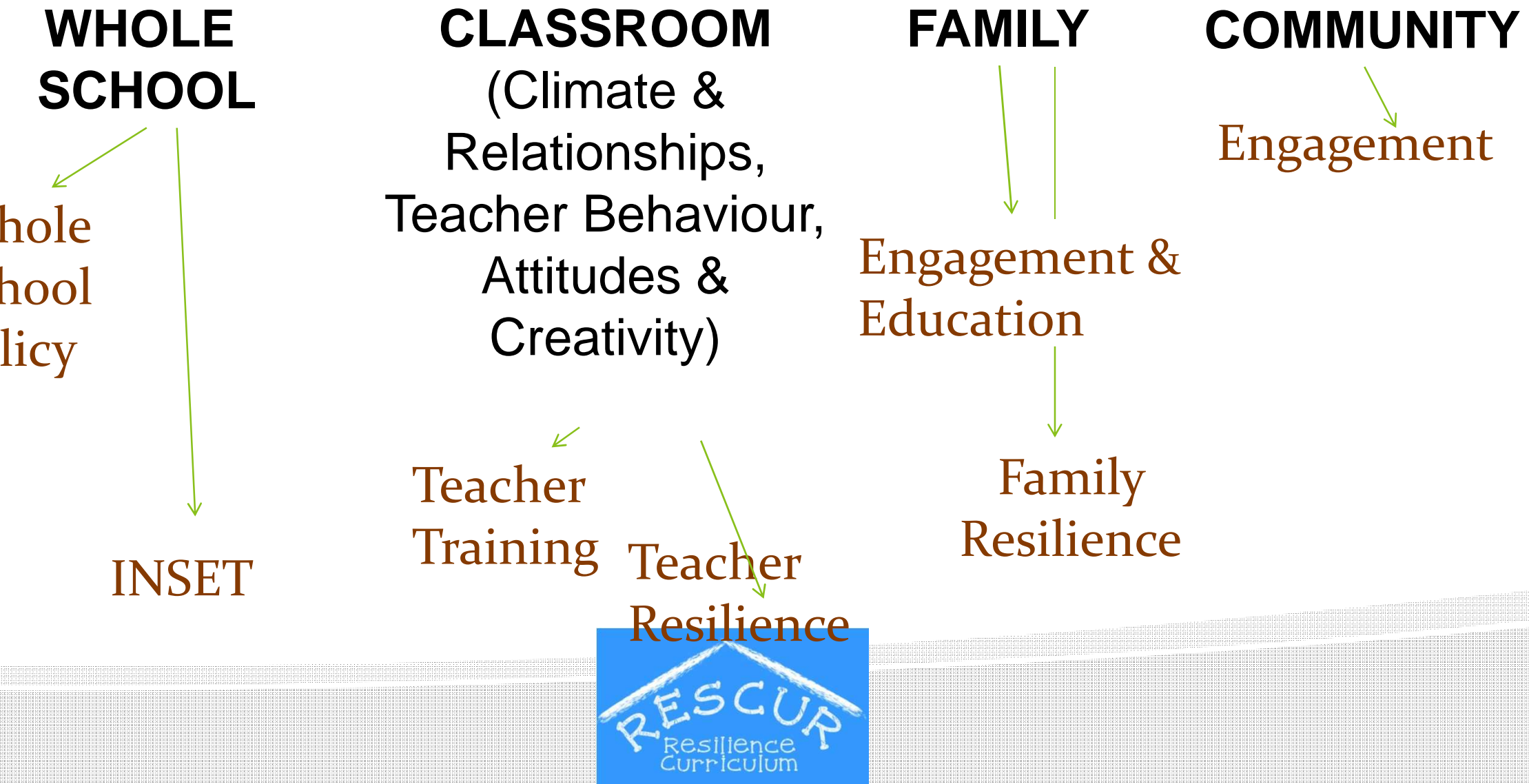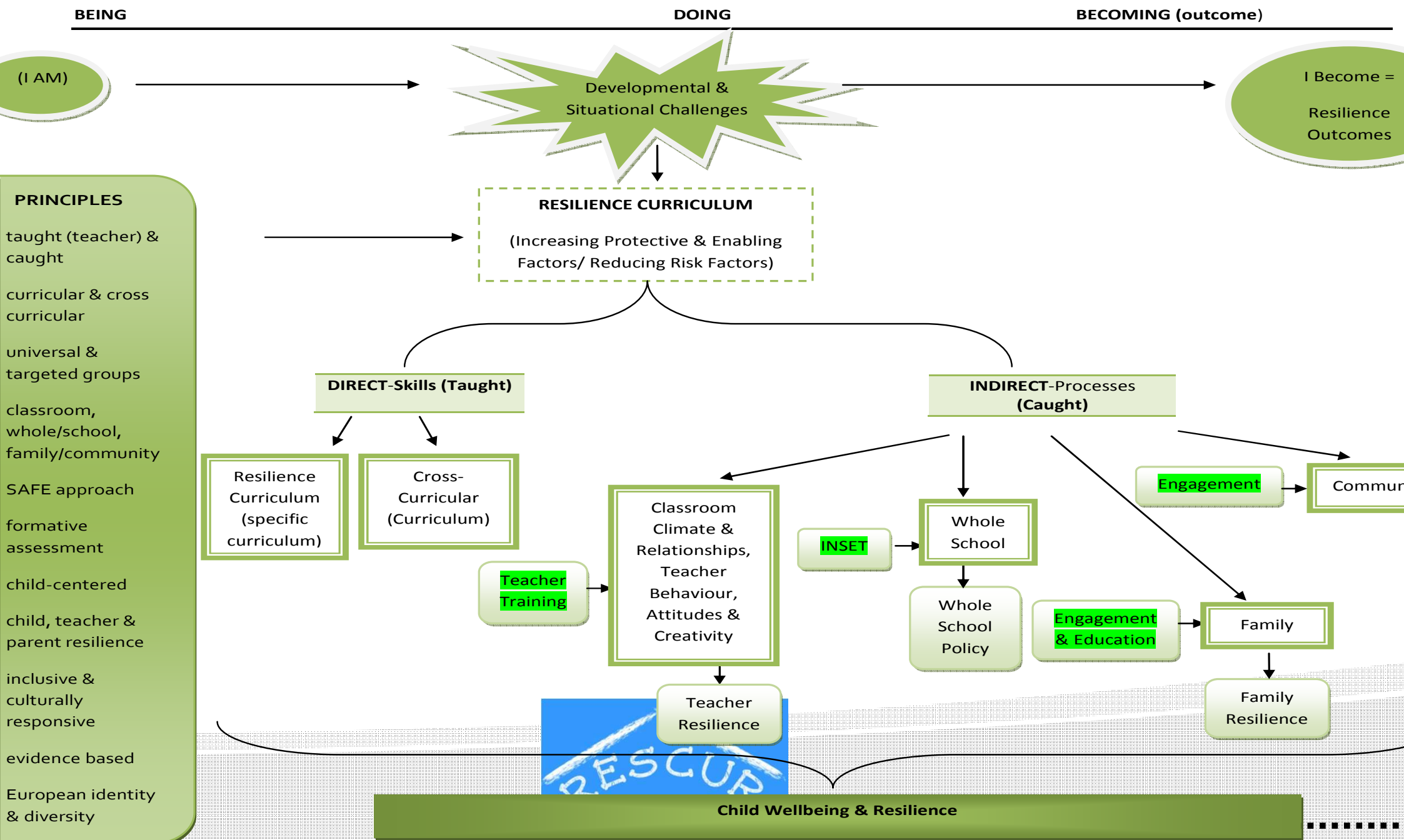**INDIRECT-Processes**
(Caught)

DIRECT-Skills
(Taught)

Resilience as
Specific Curriculum Area

Resilience as
Cross-Curricular Area

INDIRECT-Processes (Caught)

WHOLE SCHOOL

CLASSROOM (Climate & Relationships, Teacher Behaviour, Attitudes & Creativity)

FAMILY

COMMUNITY

Engagement

hole hool licy

Engagement & Education

INSET

Teacher Training

Teacher Resilience

Family Resilience

BEING DOING BECOMING (outcome)

(I AM)

Developmental & Situational Challenges

I Become =
Resilience Outcomes

PRINCIPLES

taught (teacher) & caught

curricular & cross curricular

universal & targeted groups

classroom, whole/school, family/community

SAFE approach

formative assessment

child-centered

child, teacher & parent resilience

inclusive & culturally responsive

evidence based

European identity & diversity

RESILIENCE CURRICULUM

(Increasing Protective & Enabling Factors/ Reducing Risk Factors)

DIRECT-Skills (Taught)

INDIRECT-Processes (Caught)

Resilience Curriculum (specific curriculum)

Cross-Curricular (Curriculum)

Classroom Climate & Relationships, Teacher Behaviour, Attitudes & Creativity

Teacher Training

Teacher Resilience

INSET

Whole School

Whole School Policy

Engagement

Commur

Engagement & Education

Family

Family Resilience

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Child Wellbeing & Resilience

Curriculum Themes

Anastassios Matsopoulos, Mariza Gavogiannaki

Six Themes of Resilience Curriculum

- Developing a positive mindset

- Building on strengths

- Developing self-determination

- Enhancing communication skills

- Building healthy relationships

- Turning challenges into opportunities (tough mindedness)

Themes of Resilience Curriculum

- Established in the literature

- Connected to our theoretical model of Resilience emphasizing the development of Resilience Skills but also promoting processes (especially in classroom/school and family) which support children's development of resilience

Theme 1: Developing of Positive Mindset Malta

- **Optimistic thinking and positive mindset when facing life's adversities**
  - **Dispositional optimism**-good things will happen, confidence to persevere in adversity (Scheiner & Curver, 1992)
  - **Positive thinking**/self-talk (promotes health, well-being & longevity (Seligman, 2011)

Theme 1: Developing of Positive Mindset Malta

- **Using emotions to promote growth and wellbeing:**
  - Appreciating & enjoying one's positive emotions (positive emotions & adaptive coping strategies important to satisfying life, protects against development of psychological problems (Compton, 2005)

  - Humour (positive appraisal of life events----less stress, adds to psychological well-being, life satisfaction & self-esteem (Peterson, Ruch, Beerman, Park & Seligman, 2007)

Theme 2: Building on Strengths-Sweden

Building and developing strengths helps child to face challenging situations & adversity

- **Positive self-concept and self-esteem** (protective factor against adversity) Bernard, 2004, Garmezy 1991)

- **Awareness and use of strengths** in academic and social engagement (promotes positive mindset, which is important protective factor)

Theme 3: Developing Self-determination- Portugal

Self determination & components are protective factors (Bernard, 2004) & some moderate the effect of adversity on well being (Simoes, 2012)

- **Creative problem-solving and decision making** (important skill to deal with adversity, moderator of impact of negative life events on well-being (Simoes, 2012)

- **Empowerment:** (resilient children high in autonomy, self-efficacy, internal locus of control Garmezy, 1991; resilient children characterized by feelings of confidence and belief that things will work out (Werner, 1992, 2004)

Theme 4: Enhancing communication skills-Croatia

- **Interpersonal communication** (**effective listening skills** promote positive interactions and basis for asking help in the future; **giving feedback** has a positive effect on people, connection w others and increased resilience due to strong relationships (Luthar, 2006); **communicating ideas** promotes trust, develops awareness, identity, satisfies internal needs for power & appreciation (Glasser, 2000)

- **Assertive behaviour** (relates to healthy self-esteem, healthy social development)

Theme 5: Building healthy relationships- Italy

- **Establishing & maintaining healthy and rewarding relationships** (resilience relates to positive healthy social relationships w adults and peers (Werner, 1990); positive teacher-student relationship protective factor for children (Hamre & Pianta, 2005); benefits of relationships=social skills, self-awareness, awareness of others, recruit of emotional support in times of stress (Hartup, 1992, Doll, Zucker & Brehm, 2004)

Theme 5: Building & Maintaining healthy relationships-Italy

- **Engaging in ethical and responsible behavior**

Resilience involves prosocial values & attitudes (Nobles & McGrath, 2008) responsible decision making & moral development (Cohen, 2006) shifting to collective well-being rather than individual well-being.

Caring and supportive communities in schools-----benefit the child

Theme 6: Turning challenges into opportunities (tough mindedness)-Greece

- Reframing adversity is cardinal skill to become resilient.

- Turn developmental challenges & life' stressors (losses, transitions, obstacles) into opportunities for growth

- Key quality to increase resilience is capacity to re-frame adversities through development of positive coping styles (Newman, 2002)

- Enhancing mental toughness, using strengths and fostering relationships are core competencies for overcoming obstacles (Seligman, 2011)

Theme 6: Turning challenges into opportunities (tough mindedness)-Greece

- **Developing courage in adversity and persistence** in the face of failure, injustice, overcoming difficulties and setbacks (e.g. disability, sickness, discrimination)

  - Hardy attitudes (tough mindedness) amount to the courage & motivation to face stressors accurately (rather than deny or exaggerate them) Bonnano, 2004, positive mindset=confidence to persevere in adversity (Scheiner & Curver, 1992)

  - Finding positive meaning in adversity or obstacles in life important predictive factor of resilience (Hildon, Smith, Netuvelli and Blane, 2008)

- Dealing with rejection by teachers, peers, family members and managing related negative emotions (e. g. stress, anger, disappointment, frustration, sadness, sense of helplessness)

  - Rejection and isolation from peers associated with anxiety, low self-esteem, poor interpersonal skills, emotional & psychological pathology

Theme 6: Turning challenges into opportunities (tough mindedness)-Greece

- Rejection from teachers= significant stressor for child (teacher warmth, encouragement and acceptance significant resilient factor-Coyle et al. 2009)

- Rejection from parents puts child in vulnerable situation (Rohner, 2000)

  – Parent Acceptance-Rejection theory

  – Dealing with rejection emotionally & learning to take appropriate action for prevention

Theme 6: Turning challenges into opportunities (tough mindedness)-Greece

- Dealing with bullying behaviours in school & managing related negative emotions
  - Learning how to deal emotionally and take appropriate action to avoid it (previous themes connect here-how to resolve conflicts, problem solving, being assertive, learning how to be mentally tough, courageous and determined)
  - Especially important for at-risk students

- Dealing with obstacles such as family conflicts, divorce, poverty & parental unrealistic expectations and related negative emotions
  - Handle and thrive in toxic environments (Garbarino , 2008)

- Dealing with change, loss & transitions in life and managing negative emotions
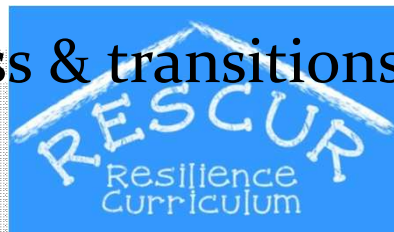
Structure and design of the activities

Birgitta Kimber

Structure

- Three manuals: early years, early primary and late primary

- Spiral curriculum, the same themes for all ages

- Developmental/inclusive rather than age determined

- In each group three different levels:
  - Basic
  - Intermediate
  - Advanced (teacher decides which level)
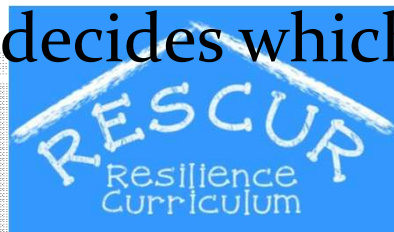
Activity

- Theme (eg. Building on Strengths)

- Overall objective (eg. discovering the self, positive self-concept and self esteem)

- Activity connected to the overall object (eg. my name)

- Learning outcomes (eg. During this activity I will learn the meaning of my name)
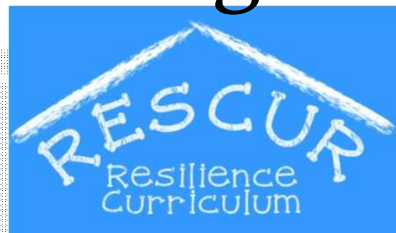
Manual

- Objective

- Materials needed

- Specific learning outcomes

- Activity in detail (eg. I, II, III)

- Homework

Principles

- Eg. **SAFE** Approach
  - **S**equenced step-by-step training approach
  - **A**ctive forms of learning
  - **F**ocus sufficient time on skill development
  - **E**xplicit learning goals
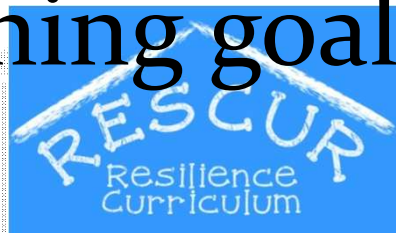
Parents' Manual

- Complementary to teachers' manual

- Homework activities connected to the 6 themes to be completed by the child and the parent together

- Underlines the role of teachers and parents collaborating together in delivering and reinforcing the curriculum

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Examples of Manual Activities

Maria Assunta Zanetti, Roberta Renati, Valeria Cavioni

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Theme: *Developing Healthy Relationships*

The focus of this theme is the development of attitudes and skills which enable children to:

- **establish and maintain healthy relationships**
- engage in ethical and responsible behavior

Developing healthy relationships: **Rationale**

- The resilience literature underlines
  - the protective benefits of having positive and healthy social relationships with adults and peers for children facing risk in their lives
  - the risks of not having such relationships: children without functional support systems are more vulnerable to stress and less likely to cope with adversity (Lee et al, 2012)

Rationale

- **Healthy family relationships** provide a protective environment which promotes the healthy development of children, even in the face of stress and other risk factors (Morrison Gutman et al, 2010).

- **Peer relationships** are a very important source of resilience and wellbeing for children; children who are able to build and maintain positive relationships with friends and peers, are more able to acquire social skills, develop self- and social awareness, and recruit emotional support in times of stress (Doll, Zucker and Brehm, 2004

- **Healthy teacher –student relationships** are particularly protective for vulnerable children who lack such relationships at home (Hamre and Pianta, 2005)

  - increase students' ability to cope with stressful experiences and their positive prosocial behaviour with peers and adults (Klem and Connell, 2004).
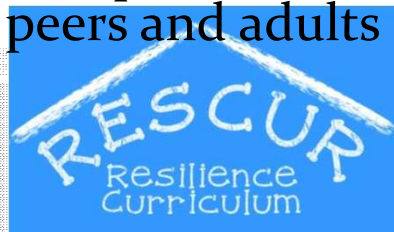
Activity: Making and having Friends

- **Topic**: Making and having friends

- **Objective**: Appreciating the value of having friends

- **Level**: Intermediate

- **Learning outcome**: During this activity, I will learn to identify the benefits of having friends

- **Resources**: Manual, sheet of paper, crayons

Activity: Making and Having Friends

Setting: children together in a circle

I. introduce the importance of friendship asking children to think about a friend or friends they have within or outside their class and things they used to do together.

II. Ask children to draw an event of their life they shared with a friend.

III. Children share their papers with their classmates and discuss how they felt sharing that experience.

IV. Teacher writes down on a poster the children's experiences and feelings and help them to understand the importance to have a friend to better appreciate moments of life.

V. Homework: children ask parents to tell them one important experience of their life they shared with a friend. Parents describe to children how they felt. Together they write down the parents' story.
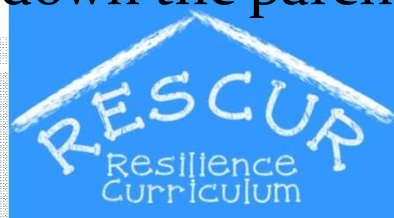
The Early Years Curriculum

Renata Miljevic-Ridicki, Tea Pavin Ivanec and Marija Saric

The Early Years Curriculum Manual

1.1. Brief theoretical overview of resilience

1.2. Importance of developing resilience at an early age

1.3. Risk and protective factors

1.4. Prerequisites of developing child resilience

    - family environment

    - quality of parent-child relationship

    - characteristics of "resilient family"

    - role of early years teachers in child resilience

      development

The Early Years Curriculum Manual

1.5. Model of resilience development

- strengthening protective factors and reducing risk

  factors

- teaching resilience by direct action

- creating secure and supportive environment

Goals of the Early years curriculum

Implementation of basic skills

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Planning Early Years prerequisites

1. Support of the principle
2. Support of Early Years expert team
3. Parental involvement
4. Cooperation with local community
5. Addresses needs of ALL children

Precurriculum activities

Focus groups with:

- ✓ parents

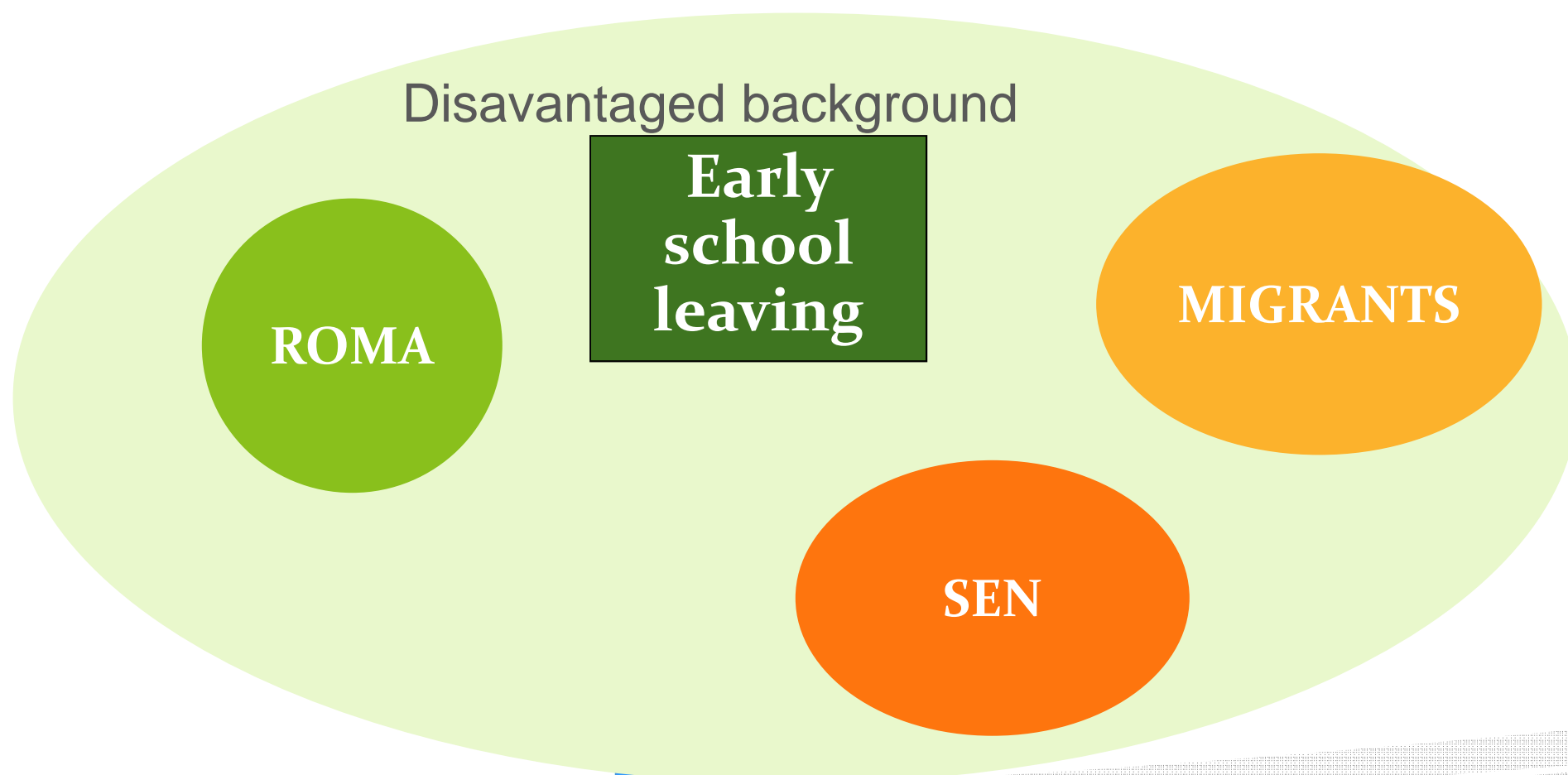- ✓ kindergarten teachers

- ✓ children

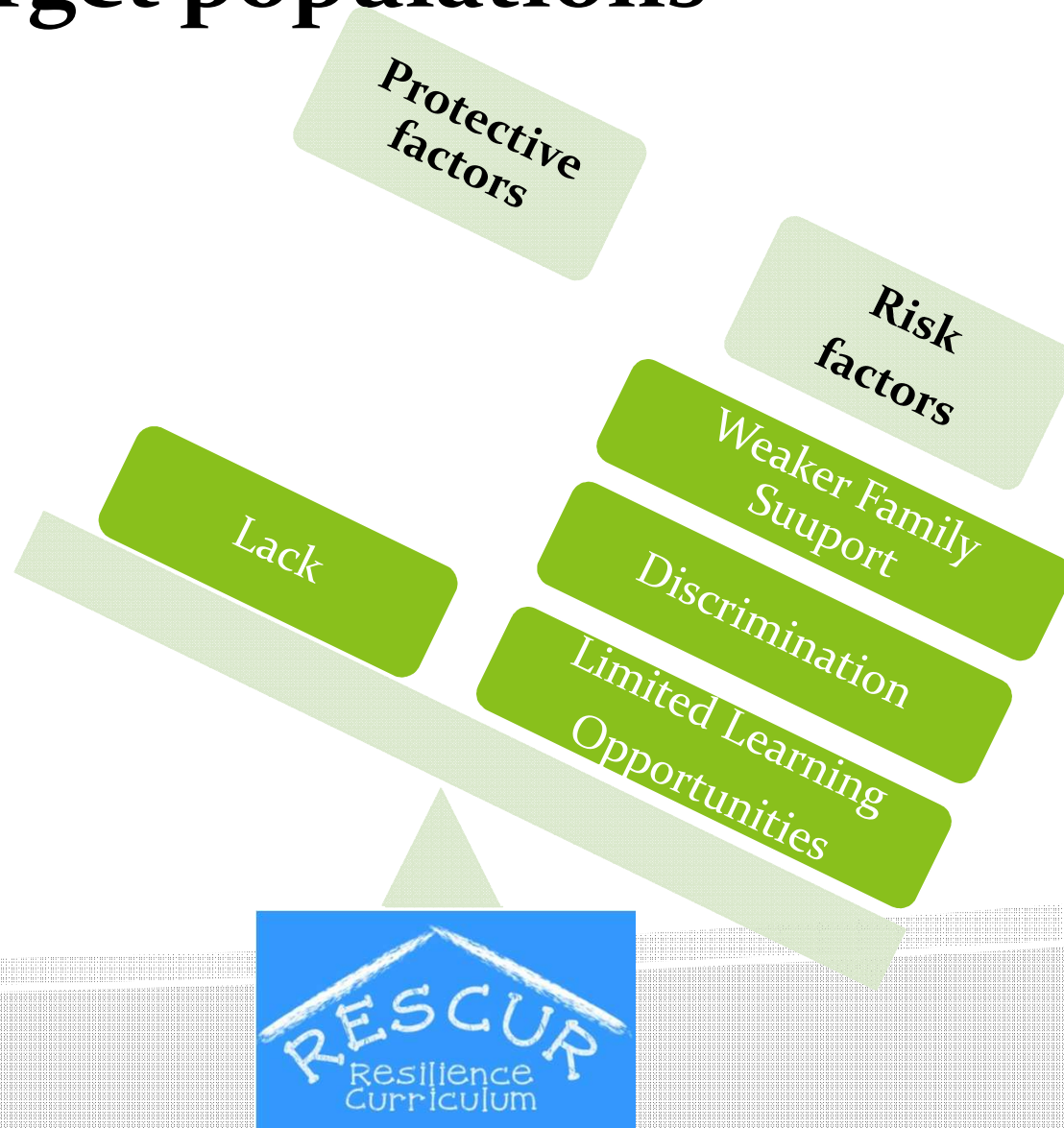# A Resilience Curriculum for ALL

Celeste Simoes and Paula Lebre

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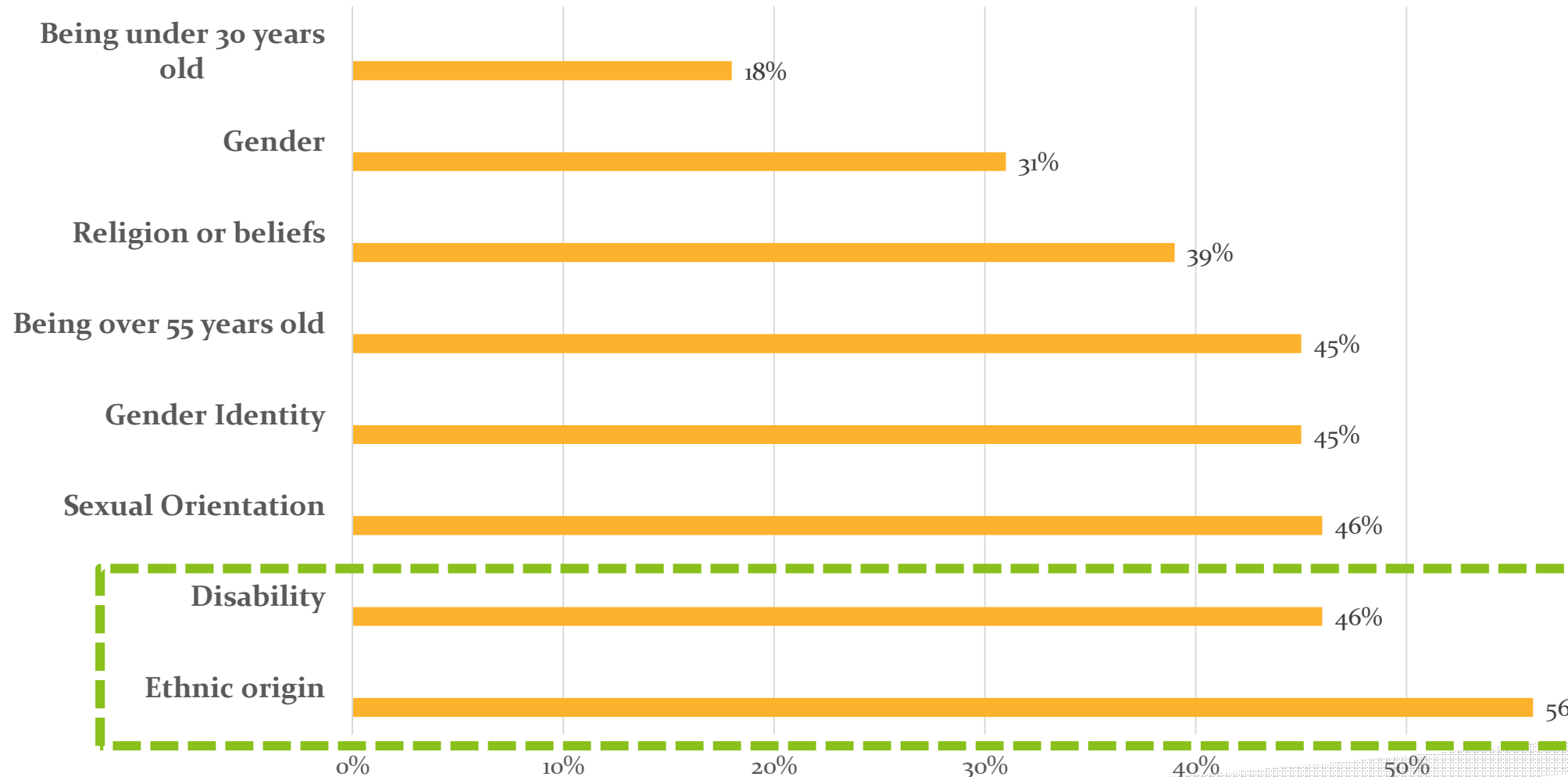Resilience Curriculum

Specific target populations

Specific target populations

ROMA

SEN

MIGRANTS

Protective factors

Risk factors

Lack

Weaker Family Suuport

Discrimination

Limited Learning Opportunities

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Discrimination on the basis of ... (Widespread)

Category	Percentage
Being under 30 years old	18%
Gender	31%
Religion or beliefs	39%
Being over 55 years old	45%
Gender Identity	45%
Sexual Orientation	46%
Disability	46%
Ethnic origin	56

Main Areas

Risk

Social Disadvantage & Diversity

Special Educational Needs

Minorities & Immigrants

Disability

Gifted Children

Roma

Refugees

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ROMA: Why a Resilience Program?

Largest, most impoverished, most vulnerable minority in C&E Europe

Stereotypes (e.g. Inferior and Dangerous)

Discrimination/Exclusion (Social, Political, Economic, Geographic)

Limited access to health care services

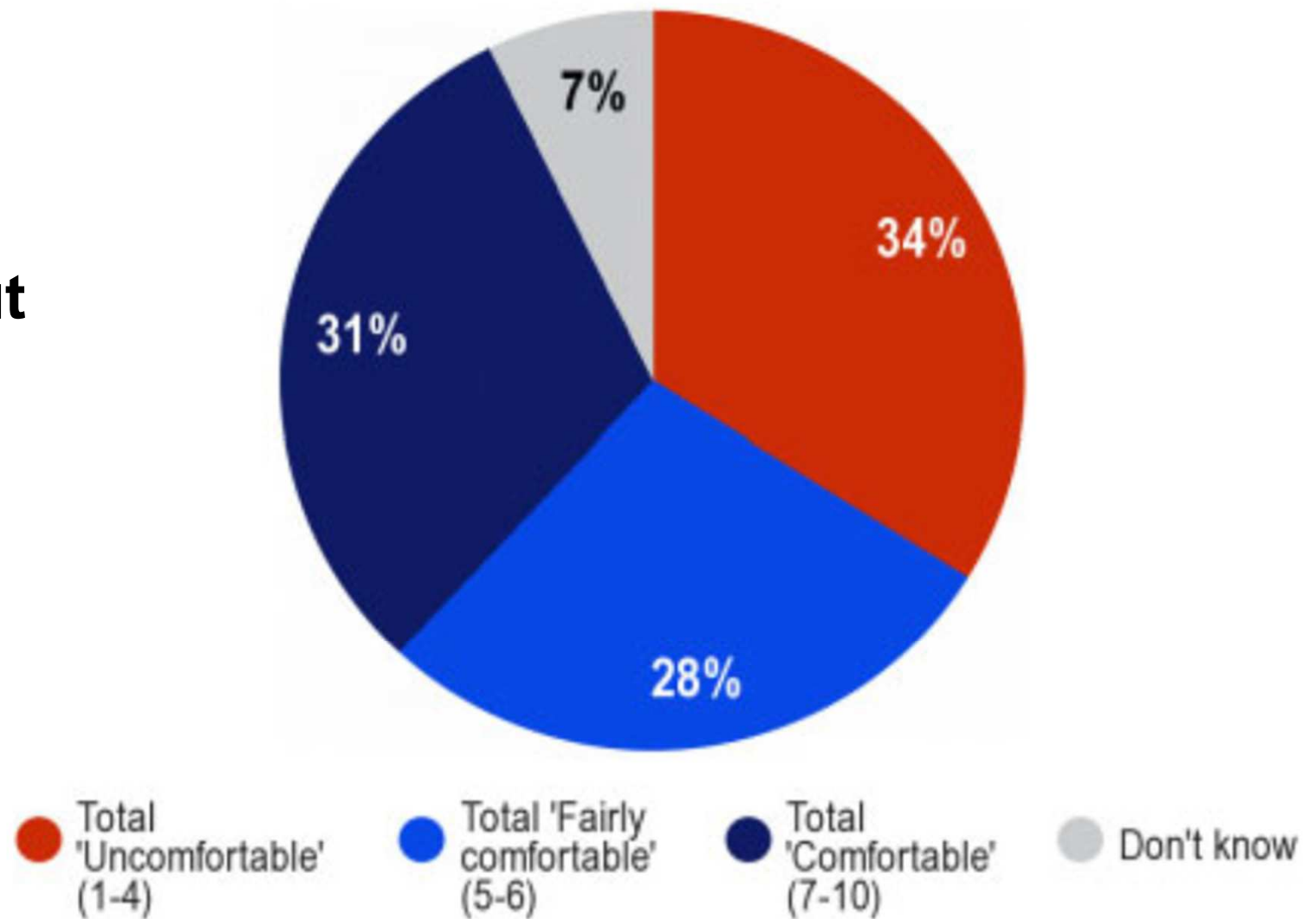Heavily dependent on state welfare

Limited education

Low levels of skills for labour market

UNICEF (2005). Excluded and invisible: The state of world's chi
In www.unicef.org/sowc06/pdfs/sowc06_fullreport.pdf

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How citizens would feel about their children having Roma schoolmates?

Total 'Uncomfortable' (1-4) — 34%
Total 'Fairly comfortable' (5-6) — 28%
Total 'Comfortable' (7-10) — 31%
Don't know — 7%

ROMA: Focus on...

Promote educational equality

Promote resilience assets for positive development and active citizensh

Reduce school absenteeism and early leaving *(Dimakos & Papakonstantinopolou, 20*

We feel that one of the main problems that we, as Gypsy women, face, is low self-esteem. Th *n urgent need to strengthen our awareness of our own value and of our ability to resolve our* *roblems.*

here is no doubt that self-awareness would lift our social, educational, political and cultura *wareness. It would also lead to our undertaking social and educational action ourselves."*

Romnea/Gypsy women's manifesto, Seville, May,

REFUGEES: Focus on...

- Internal resources are one of the major contribution to refugee resilience
  - Optimism, adaptability, perseverance, belief in inner strength, positive attitude, ho[p] in the future, locus of control, sense of coherence and purpose, high academic expectations *(Hutchinson & Dorsett, 2012; Førde, 2007)*

- External resources

  - Friends, parents, school (extracurricular activities, sports, teachers) (McEwen, 2007)

- Children stressed the need for more information to enable them to protec[t] themselves, especially since many do not come from violent environment[s] and have developed few coping mechanisms *(UNHRC, 2007).*

Disability: Why a Resilience Program?

- Attitudinal and structural barriers

- Discrimination, compromised participation, social exclusion

- Disability-related risks and experiences that increases the likelihood o negative outcomes *(King et al. 2003)*

- Refer more frequently, suffer negative life events, compared to their mainstream peers *(Simões, Matos, Tomé, et al., 2009)*
  - victims of bullying or being rejected by classmates
  - Perceive their school performance to be lower than average
  - More pressed with homework
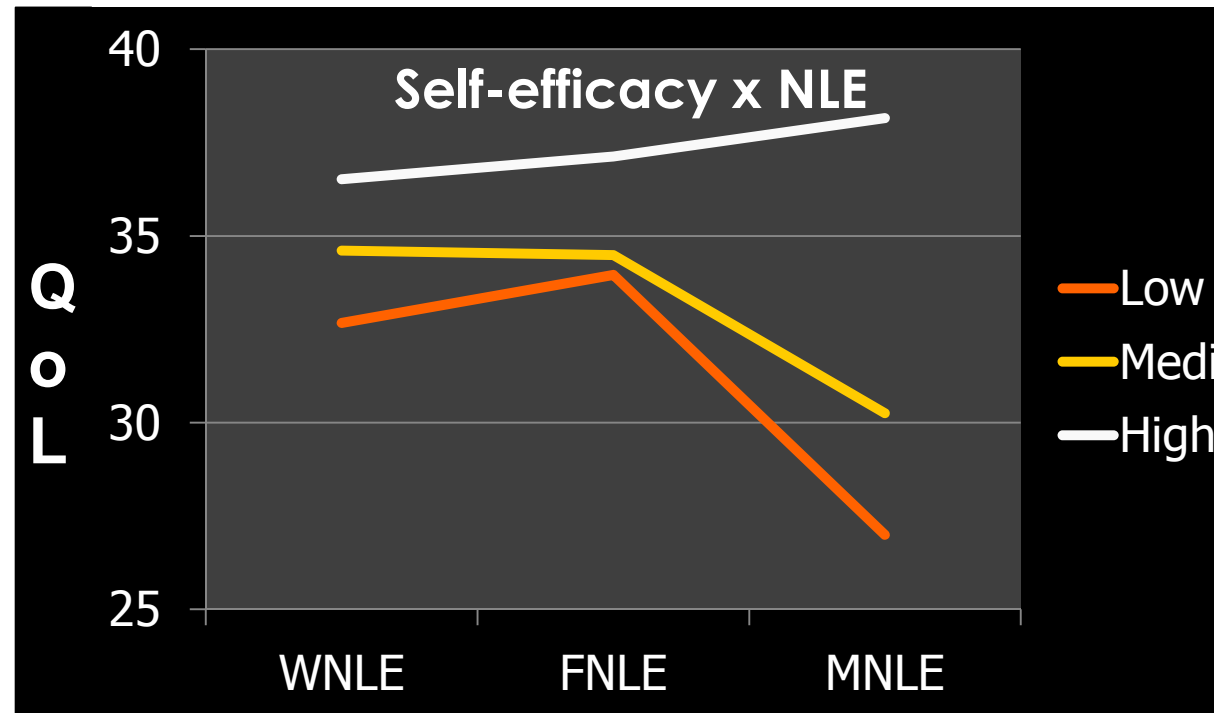 - Feel more frequently unhappy, lonelier and sadder

Disability: Focus on…

omote internal and external assets to cope with challenges and versities *(Benard, 1999; Wehmeyer & Schalock, 2001; Simões et al., 2009)*
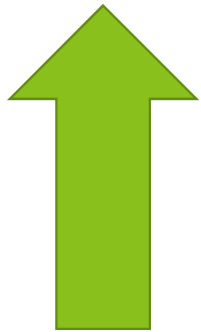
Self-determination
- Self-awareness
- Cooperation and communication
- Empathy
- Problem solving
- Self-efficacy
- Goals and aspirations

Caring relationships, high expectations,

meaningful participation
- Home, school, peers & community

Self-efficacy x NLE

Q O L

40

35

30

25

WNLE   FNLE   MNLE

—Low
—Medi
—High

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Gifted: Why a Resilience Program?

Resilience

Vulnerability
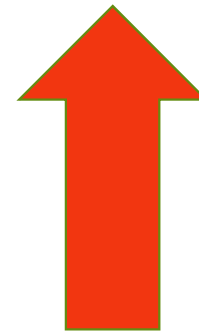
gher academic expectations and outcomes

any cases of underachievement
- Disorganization, lack of concentration, perfectionism, low self-esteem, unwillingness to conform, anxiety, vulnerability to peer pressure, external locus of control

  (Ford, 1993, Kline & short, 1999)

- Depends on:
  - Type of giftedness
  - Educational fit
  - Personal characteristics

    (Neihart, 1999)

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Gifted: Focus on...

- Reduce risk of maladjustment strengthening factors that enhance positive outcomes (Reis, Colbert, Hébert, 2005)
    - Believe in self
    - Personal characteristics (sensitivity, independence, determination to succeed, appreciation of cultural diversity, inner will)
    - Problem solving skills
    - Support systems
    - Participation in special programs

- Set and adjust learning goals (King, 2004)

Thanks from RESCUR team

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