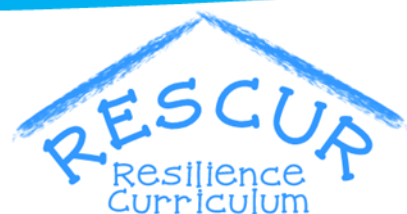# RESCUR PILOT REPORT

PORTUGAL

Self-Determination Theme

March 2015

INTRODUCTION

Self-determination can be viewed as "acting as the primary causal agent in one's life and making choices and decisions regarding one's quality of life free from undue external influence or interference"[1] (p. 24). According to self-determination theory, for an optimal functioning and development, individuals needs to feel related, competent, and autonomous[2]. Self- determination theory highlights three key elements[3]: 1) individuals have the potential to be active players in their own lives through the control of internal (motivations and emotions) and external forces; 2) individual have a predisposition towards growth, development and positive functioning; 3) social contexts are fundamental to nurture the natural tendency for positive functioning and growth since these last features aren't automatic manifestations of the developmental process. The interaction between these three components is fundamental for positive development and psychological well-being.

Self-determination is an important asset on resilience context. Research show that many of its components are protective factors[4] and some of them can even moderate the effect of adversity on well-being[5]. Promoting self-determination seems to have positive benefits for students to achieve more positive adult outcomes[6]. Thus, skill development must be parallel with the promotion of attitudes critical to becoming self-determined and students need to be provided the opportunities to express preferences, make choices, and experience outcomes based on those choices.

In the scope of RESCUR Project, Self-determination theme presents two subthemes:

- Creative Problem Solving and Decision Making
- Empowerment/Autonomy

Problem solving entails the ability to plan, critical think, reflect and evaluate different solutions before taking a decision or go for an action. Problem solving can be defined as "the self-directed cognitive-behavioral process by which an individual, couple, or group attempts to identify or discover effective solutions for specific problem encountered in everyday living. More specifically, this cognitive-behavioral process: (a) makes available a variety of potentially effective solutions for a particular problem and; (b) increases the probability of selecting the most effective solution from among the various alternatives". This process involves a mindful work oriented to: (1) reach a solution for the problem; (2) the reduction of the distress; (3) or both. This first sub-theme, Creative Problem Solving and Decision Making, is divided into three topics that encompass the general steps of problem solving. In the *first topic*, children are invited to define problems (thinking and collecting information about them, defining objectives and analyzing

[1] (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1997)
[2] (Deci & Ryan, 2000)
[3] (Deci & Vansteenkiste, 2004)
[4] (Benard, 2004)
[5] (Simões, 2012)
[6] (Wehmeyer & Schalock, 2001)

barriers and facilitators) and to generate creative solutions for them. In the *second topic*, focused on the evaluation of the solutions and decision making, children develop skills to evaluate solutions and its value, to evaluate time and effort needed, and to evaluate the results of the solutions. The *third topic* highlights the implementation and evaluation of the solutions, allowing children to solve problems by trying on solutions, and evaluating the results of solutions, trying again, if necessary. In this last topic, children are also able to summarize the problem solving process and its steps. Studies on resilience reveal the presence of problem solving skills in resilient children and adolescents. Problem solving is identified as one of the determinants skills to deal with adversity, since it appears as a moderators of the impact of negative life events on well-being. These skills play a key role in risk assessment, resources evaluation, in the establishment of realistic plans, and in the search for healthier relationships, which in turn are essential for adaptation and resilience.

Empowerment is conceptualized as individual's perception of personal competence and their belief that goals can be attained; autonomy means a sense of one's identity and an ability to act independently and exert some control over one's environment[7]. This second sub-theme, Empowerment/Autonomy, is divided into three topics. In the *first topic*, developing meaning in life and sense of purpose are the subjects to be explored. Meaning and sense of purpose are important assets in resilience context. These assets are interconnected, being the sense of purpose an important piece in general meaning. Meaning can be defined as "shared mental representations of possible relationships among things, events and relationships". Meaning can be appreciated at different perspectives, namely, global meaning and situational meaning, or presence of meaning versus search for meaning. Sense of purpose can be defined as "a stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that is at once meaningful to the self and of consequence to the world beyond the self". Sense of purpose is one of the four meanings related human needs together with value, efficacy and self-worth, which can be transformed into four simple questions that express the meaning of our lives: Who I am? What do I love? How shall I live? How can I make the difference? The *second topic* aims to foster agency (individual, proxy, and collective) and self-efficacy. The agency perspective is rooted in the view that individuals are proactively engaged in their own development and make things happen by their actions. To be an agent is to influence intentionally one's functioning and life circumstances. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how individuals feel, think, motivate themselves and behave and may produce diverse effects through cognitive, motivational, and affective and selective processes. Among the mechanisms of human agency, none is more central or pervasive than belief of personal efficacy, since unless individuals believe they can produce desired effects by their actions, they have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties[8]. Both agency and self-efficacy have been referred as essential to resilience[9]. The *third topic* highlights the promotion of self-advocacy in children, focusing the knowledge of the self and others, and how/what to advocate. Self-advocacy, or the ability to speak up for what we want and need (Schreiner, 2007) is an important component of self-determination that has been related with resilience[10], since it acts as a moderator of the impact of adversity on child's psychological well-being or as a mediator, promoting self-esteem, self-awareness and a greater connection to the community, which are important resilience assets[11]. Self-advocacy includes different components: knowledge of self, knowledge of rights, communication and leadership. The first two components, knowledge of the self and knowledge of rights,
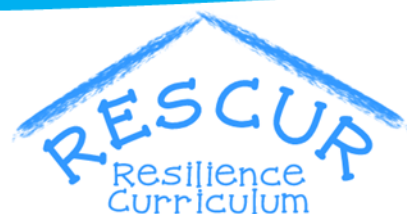
[7] (Benard, 2004)
[8] (Bandura, 1997)
[9] (Benard, 2004; Herman et al., 2011)
[10] (Goodley, 2005)
[11] (Grover, 2005; Benard, 1999)

are considered the bases of self-advocacy. Knowledge of the self can includes strengths, preferences, goals, dreams, interests, learning style, support needs, accommodation needs, characteristics of one's disability (if it's the case) and responsibilities. The knowledge of rights encompasses the awareness and understanding of different types of human rights (e.g. personal, community, consumer, educational) as well as the knowledge of steps to redress violations and to advocate for change and the knowledge of resources available.

METHODOLOGY

Description of the schools in the Portuguese Pilot

The Portuguese pilot took place in four main settings: (1) Grouping of schools Dr. Azevedo Neves, (2) Grouping of schools Dr. Ruy Luis Gomes,(3) Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Almada (Non-governmental organization), and (4) Casa das Cores (Temporary shelter). In total 9 schools/kindergartens were involved, respectively, 2 primary schools and kindergarten from the Grouping of Schools Dr Azevedo Neves, 3 primary schools and kindergartens from the Grouping of schools Dr Ruy Luis Gomes, 3 kindergartens from Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Almada and a group of children from Casa das Cores. The pilot preparation involved prior contacts with the direction boards of schools and institutions involved, as well as with the local authority in Almada City, responsible for the area of education in order to define the timeline and promote a wider dissemination for teachers interested in participating in the pilot study. On the next section a brief description of the four main settings will be presented.

Grouping of Schools Dr. Azevedo Neves

Belongs to the public Portuguese education system, located in Amadora Council, Águas-Livres, and aggregates one Basic School with 2nd, 3rd Cycle and Secondary levels (EB 2,3 c/ Sec. Dr. Azevedo Neves), and two Basic schools with Kindergarten and 1st cycle levels (EB1-JI José Ruy; EB1-JI Condes da Lousã). The Education project in this grouping has the fundamental principles of equity, justice, responsibility and efficacy. The primary objective is the student's educational success, citizenship, sociolinguistic and educational integration. The education is based in a plural valorisation of humanistic, scientific, technological, artistic expression, sports and vocational domains. In total has 1600 students in kindergarten (3-5 years), 1st and 2nd cycle (6-12 years), 3rd cycle (12-15 years) and secondary (15-18 years) levels. The students have a multicultural background, with a high percentage of students coming from African and South American Portuguese speaking countries (56%), such as Cape Verde, Angola, Guinea, Sao Tome, Brazil. Student's family socio-economic level is medium or low. In terms of housing conditions a considerable number of students live in illegal houses and in some cases in housing with poor sanitary conditions. The school surrounding areas face problems such as traffic and drug consumption, violence, criminality. Some students have social and linguistic difficulties; a high rate of academic failure and integration difficulties. Lack of positive parental role models is reflected in the educational context, with problems of indiscipline and learning underachievement. The percentage of students with special educational needs is of 6 %, with a higher prevalence of severe emotional problems, learning disabilities (dyslexia) and intellectual and developmental disabilities. This is a reference school for children with autism spectrum disorders, having three special units (Teacch rooms), although children are, according to their needs, included as much as possible in the regular class according to each individual education plan. In our Pilot some of these children have been involved in the pilot sessions in the regular class.

Grouping of Schools Ruy Luís Gomes

Belongs to the public Portuguese education system, Almada Council, Laranjeiro, aggregates a Basic school with 2nd, 3rd cycle and Secondary level (EB2/3 Ruy Luís Gomes, and three basic and kindergarten schools

(EB1/JI Laranjeiro 1, EB1/JI Laranjeiro 2, EB1/JI Alfeite). The primary commitment of the school is to promote the educational and personal achievement of all their students. This grouping of schools has all education levels from kindergarten (3-5 years old) to secondary with scientific and vocational curriculums as well as alternative curriculums. The school population is of 1676 students, 80% attending Basic levels, from which 170 students in kindergarten (10%), 532 students in the 1st cycle (33%), 287 students in the 2nd cycle (17%) and 328 students in the 3rd cycle (20%). The percentage of students with special educational needs is of 5%. The cultural and linguistic diversity of students is high, with 21% of students having other nationalities (28 countries), with a particular relevance for African countries with Portuguese speaking language and Brazil. The family are characterized by low economic resources and low educational levels. The students' academic achievement is low, under the National success rates, characterized by student's low expectations and lack of interest at school.

Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Almada

A non-governamental, non-profitable social institution, located in Almada Council promoting qualified social services in the domain of social action aiming at promoting inclusion, personal, social, spiritual and citizenship development. The objective of this institution is to satisfy social difficulties inspired by Christian principals. Provides services in the educational, social and health sectors for children, youth, adults and the elderly. In what concerns the preschool education, follows the National Education curriculum. In total, has 6 nursery and kindergartens (Centro Integrado Arco Iris (72 children 3 months -2 years); Mini Creche Moinho Encantado (29 children, 3 months -3 years); Centro Comunitário PIA I (75 children 3 -5 years), Complexo Social a Casinha (126 children 3 months-5 years), Centro social da Trafaria (122 children 3 months- 5 years), and finally a Family nursery service supporting 144 children (3 months to 5 years).

Casa das cores

Is a Temporary Shelter for children in distress, victims of abuse and/or neglect, promoted by Movimento ao serviço da vida, a non-governmental, non-profitable organization of social solidarity which provides accommodation for 12 children at risk, with ages ranging from 3 months to 12 years old. This placement aims at building a viable life project for each child, seeking to respond to all their individual needs in an environment as closest as possible of a family structured environment and simultaneously intervene with their families enabling them to carry out parental duties. The institution provides among other supports, social skills training sessions in small groups, which was the context where the session of this pilot were undertake.

In order to select the participants for the pilot, the direction boards of schools/organizations were responsible for identifying the teachers/educators that voluntary would be willing to participate in the Pilot. The participants in the pilot training were in total 37 teachers, representative members of the direction school board and other school staff, as well a representative from a city council from the social action department. Due to the geographical distance of the schools, two training events were organized. One training took place at the school headquarter of Azevedo Neves (Group 1), a second training took place at Ruy Lopes Gomes school headquarters (Group 2). Both trainings were provided in a schedule after school period (5pm-8pm), in four sessions of approximately 3 hours, in October–November of 2014. The contents of the training followed the RESCUR partnership main guidelines. All the support materials necessary for the class implementation of the pilot were provided for the teachers.

The implementation took place in 28 classes by 16 kindergarten educators, 10 primary school teachers and due to the specific characteristics of one placement in our pilot (Foster care), by 1 technician (psychomotor therapist). The school levels included 16 kindergarten classes; 6 early primary classes (1st and 2nd year); and 3 late primary classes (3rd and 4th year) (Table 1, 2). Each teacher/educator implemented at least 6 sessions. Although in some classes, particularly in the kindergarten level, the number of sessions was higher. In one school the educators decided to implement sessions every day of the week during six weeks (30). Also some teachers added some parts of the sessions, such as the mindfulness activities across other days of the week, besides the day of the session implementation. The teachers/educators were responsible to choose among the theme, which topics and level they would use, according to the needs of their children, although it was reinforced that preferably they could choose at least sessions from both sub-themes and from different topics. They were also informed that, if necessary, they could make changes they would consider necessary for the better suitability of the activity according to the developmental level of the children in their classes. The next tables describe the participants involved in the Pilot.

Table 1.Description of the Participants in the Portuguese pilot (Group 1)

School grouping	School/ Institution	Class Educational Level/ Age group	Number of students in the class	Professional Role	Pilot implementation in the class ✓ Number of sessions	Pilot Evaluation
Grouping of Schools Azevedo Neves (AGAN)		-	-	Direction board Pedagogical assessor	-	-
	EB1/JI Condes da Lousã	Kindergarten 4-5 years	25	Educator	✓ 6	1,2,3,4,5
		Kindergarten 3-4 years	21	Educator	✓6	1,2,3,4,5
		Early primary year 1 6-7 years	21	Teacher	✓6	1,2,3,4,5
		Early primary year 2 7-8 years	22	Teacher	✓6	1,2,3,4,5
		Late primary year 3 8-9 years	19	Teacher	✓6	1,2,3,4,5
	EB1/JI José Ruy	Kindergarten 4-5 years	25	Educator	✓6	1,2,3,4,5
		Late primary year 3 8-9 years	18	Teacher	✓6	1,2,3,4,5
		Early primary year 1 6-7 years	22	Teacher	✓6	1,2,3,4,5
		Late primary year 4 9-10 years	16	Teacher	✓6	1,2,3,4,5
		Late primary year 4 9-10 years	18	Teacher	✓6	1,2,3,4,5
	Other staff members providing specialized services in the school community	-	All school students	Psychologist	-	2
		-	All school students	Social educator	-	1
		-	All school students	Social service	-	1
		-	All school students	Psychomotor Therapist (supporting SEN childrens)	-	1
Temporary shelter	Casa das Cores	3-12	12	Psychomotor Therapist	✓9	1,2,3,4,5

Legend: 1-Training evaluation; 2- Assessment checklists (teacher/student); 3-Pilot implementation index; 4-Self-reflective diary; 5-focus group

Table 2. Description of the Participants in the Portuguese pilot (Group 2)

School grouping	School/ Institution	Class Educational Level/ Age group	Number of students in the class	Professional Role	Pilot implementation in the class ✓ Number of sessions	Pilot Evaluation
AERLG- Group of schools Ruy Luis Gomes	Member of the direction board	-	-	Sub-Director	-	1
	EB1/JI Laranjeiro n°1	Kindertarten 3-5 years	20	Educator	✓ 6	1,2,3,4,5
		Kindertarten 3-5 years	22	Educator	✓6	1,2,3,4,5
		Kindergarten 3-5 years	25	Educator	✓6	1,2,3,4,5
		Early primary 6-7 years	20	Educator	✓6	1,2,3,4,5
		Early primary 6-7 years	20	Teacher	✓6	1,2,3,4,5
	EB1/JI Laranjeiro n° 2	Early primary 6-7 years	20	Teacher	✓6	1,2,3,4,5
		Kindergarten 3-5 years	20	Educator	✓6	1,2,3,4,5
		Kindergarten 3-5 years	20	Educator	✓6	1,2,3,4,5
		Kindergarten 3-5 years	25	Educator	✓6	1,2,3,4,5
	EB1/JI Alfeite	Kindergarten 3-5 years	21	Educator	✓6	1,2,3,4,5
		Kindergarten 3-5 years	19	Educator	✓ 6	1,2,3,4,5
Santa Casa Misericórdia Almada	SCMA PIA 1	Kindergarten 3-5 years	25	Educator	✓6	1,2,3,4,5
		Kindergarten 3-5 years	24	Educator	✓6	1,2,3,4,5
	SCMA Casinha	Kindergarten 3-5 years	24	Educator	✓6	1,2,3,4,5
		Kindergarten 3-5 years	23	Educator	✓6	1,2,3,4,5
	SCMA Centro social trafaria	Kindergarten 3-5 years	27	Educator	✓6	1,2,3,4,5
City Council of Almada	Department of Social Action	-		Social service	-	-

Legend: 1-Training evaluation; 2- Assessment checklists (teacher/student); 3-Pilot implementation index; 4-Self-reflective diary; 5-focus group
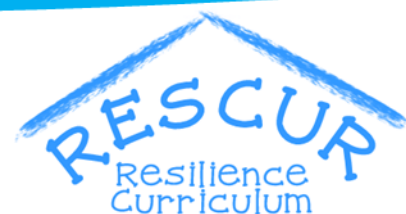
Evaluation instruments and procedures

The following instruments were used for the collection of data: Teacher training evaluation (N=21); Teacher self-reflection diaries (N=126); Assessment checklists (Teacher and Pupils version) (N=407). The assessment checklists were filled by the teacher and by the children, although it was requested that each teacher would choose whether to fill the entire checklists or only the activities learning goals under the sessions piloted. Two teachers (focus groups) were set in the two schools grouping, inviting all the teachers to attend. A group of questions were devised: What went well? ; What didn't go well?; What did the children most liked in the sessions?; What didn´t the children liked in the sessions?; Have you noticed any improvement in the students' behavior during the pilot?; What could be improved in the RESCUR Program?; Main difficulties envisioning the future?

In total 25 teachers participated, respectively 14 teachers/educators in group 1 and 11 teachers/educators in group 2. The focus groups lasted approximately one hour. Student's focus groups were set by the teachers/educators. The introduction of procedures to follow was presented in the teachers training sessions. The questions were applied at the end of the pilot sessions in their classes for all the students, asking them to give their feedback on the sessions. The questions used were: What I liked learning was…?; What I would like to improve…?

The evaluation was an ongoing process across the Portuguese pilot. The final deadline for the evaluation process and data collection from teachers and children was 15ᵗʰ February. An excel database was created, both for quantitative and qualitative data either from teachers and children. Quantitative data was then exported to an SPSS database in order to proceed with the descriptive analysis of frequencies. In what concerns qualitative data, from open questions, a content analysis was made and categories most representative of the answers were created.

This section covers the findings from the different sources used to collect data from the pilot implementation process. First are presented the results from the teacher training and curriculum evaluation questionnaire, the implementation index, the self-reflective diaries and the focus groups with the teachers (process evaluation). In the second section, there will be present results obtained in the assessment checklists (data from teachers and from children's) as well as data from the focus groups conducted with the children (results evaluation).

Process evaluation

The first set of data presented here refers to the training and curriculum evaluation by participants present in the training.

Training evaluation

Looking at each question of the training evaluation section, it is possible to find that the aspects that the participants refer as the ones they like the most were the dynamics of the session, its contents and the way trainers communicate them, as well as the support materials used in the sessions. Concerning possible changes to the training, about one fifth of the participants refer that wouldn't change nothing, but others refer that it would be important to have more time, namely to explore more in deep the manual, and to have the training and pilot implementation simultaneously. Regarding the most relevant process and contents, the main referred aspects were the training, the existence of support materials and the discovery of new pedagogical strategies. On the other hand, the most part of the participants refer that none of the process and contents were least relevant. When asked about the aspects to improve, time, particularly more time for the training, was again the most mentioned feature (about one fifth of the participants).

Curriculum evaluation

In what concerns the curriculum evaluation, the participants refer that its strongest points are its theme and contents (more than an half) and the family involvement (about one fifth), and the weakest points are the activities for 3-5 years old age group (referred by one third of the participants). About a fifth of the participants mentioned that there were no weak points in the curriculum. When asked about the learning goals, the activities, the stories and the images, these were rated as good by the majority of the participants (for more than an half in what concerns the learning goals and more than three quarters for the stories and strategies). Nevertheless some participants mentioned that there is room for change, namely, by simplifying the learning goals and adapting the activities for the age group and adjusting the time needed for the activities. For the resource pack, images and materials, even though a significant part of the participants mentioned that they were good (a third for the images and more than a half for the materials), again some proposed the addition of more illustrations, and some changes focused again on more visual resources (more appealing, more colourful,…) and adjusted to the age group (for example, bigger images to paint or to crop for the early years). For the checklists, about two thirds refer that there is a need to make changes, namely in the language used for the children. The participants refer that they contain too much information, are very exhaustive, which makes them difficult to

understand, especially for the early years. Finally, concerning the changes and future difficulties, the participants again pointed the need for changes in the aspects previously mentioned (adjustment of the strategies and concepts, assessment checklists and visual resources to early year's group). Also it was stressed the need for the inclusion of handouts for parents and more focus on the articulation with family and community, as well as the need of more time to implement the sessions as some of the major difficulties foreseen in the future.

Implementation Index

The results from the RESCUR Implementation Index for the teacher are presented in the table 3. As it is possible to verify, the major part of the aspects listed in the index were meet during the pilot by the majority of the teachers. Nevertheless some aspects, like the home activities, the assessment checklists and the extended activities were only conducted by about a half of the teachers.

Table 3: Percentages obtained in the implementation index

Have you attended a training course on the use of this manual in the classroom?	100%
Have you read carefully the guidelines in the introductory part of the Manual?	100%
Is enough time being dedicated to do the activities as suggested in the manual?	93,8%
Are you adapting the level of the activity (basic/intermediate/advanced) to the needs of students in your classroom?	100%
Are you making use of the resources provided in the manual for the activities?	100%
Are you following the SAFE approach in the implementation of the curriculum? o do program 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),	86,7%
Are you adapting the curriculum to the students' needs and interests, including developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive activities and resources?	100%
Are you implementing the curriculum faithfully as instructed in the manual?	100%
Do you keep regular record of students' progress, strengths and difficulties in the skills they are learning?	100%
Do you regularly encourage students to reflect on and monitor their own learning?	100%
Do you complete the assessment checklists at the end of the unit?	100%
Do you ask the students to complete the self assessment checklists at the end of the unit?	57%
Do you provide students with opportunity to practice the skills being learnt in their daily classroom life and outside the classroom such as during play?	100%
Do you encourage students to use the resilience skills in challenging or demanding situations, such as learning difficulties, relationship problems, exam time and transitions?	100%
Are you regularly implementing the extended activities suggested in the curriculum?	62,5%
Are you regularly implementing the home activities?	50%
Do you keep parents informed about the activities taking place at school and how they can reinforce the activities through the Parents' Manual?	87,5%
Are you infusing the curriculum into the other curricular areas such as literacy, numeracy, science education and creativity?	100%
Do you seek to reinforce the resilience skills in your daily practice, such as pedagogy, use of resources, classroom management, and relationships with your students?	100%
Do you model positive resilience skills in your daily practice in the classroom?	100%
Do you link the curriculum to the whole school activities in resilience building?	100%

Self-reflective diaries

The self-reflective diaries analysed, included sessions from the early years (42%), early primary (32%) and late primary (27%) classes. In general, the teachers applied mostly the activities corresponding to the same year age group in the RESCUR curriculum, although in the early years and early primary classes 1/3 of the activities were from the more advance curriculum age group (Table 4).

Table 4. Distribution of the reflective diaries according to the age groups

	Early years Curriculum	Early primary curriculum	Late primary curriculum
Early years	75%	25%	0%
Early Primary	0%	73%	27%
Late Primary	5%	0%	95%
Total	42%	32%	27%

In what concerns the sub-themes and topics, the sessions piloted were homogeneously divided by sub-theme 1, problem solving (52%), and sub-theme 2, empowerment/autonomy (48%). Concerning the topics distribution, there was also around 1/3 of activities from each topic (Table 4).

Table 5. Distribution of the reflective diaries according to the sub –themes and topics

	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Total
Sub theme 1	39%	30%	32%	52%
Sub theme 2	36%	33%	31%	48%
Total	38%	31%	31%	

In most diaries, teachers had quite positive comments in terms of the activity implementation, although in some reflections aspects related with time, children's behaviour, or children´s achieving the learning outcomes, were referred as aspects to consider with more attention in the future.

Table 6. Activity implementation considerations

	Average	Positive
Early years	28%	78%
Early primary	38%	62%
Late primary	31%	90%
Total	27%	73%

According to the self-reflective diaries, teachers referred main topics that children revealed more interest, such as the mindfulness (50%), the reflexion in the class (40%), the activity following the story (36%) and the stories (30%).

Around half of the teachers reported aspects in their reflections related with the learning progress in what concerns the topic that has been addressed (45%), whereas the other teachers reported only partially some progresses. A relatively smaller number of teachers (38%) referred that the learning outcomes were transferred into the daily school life, whereas around a half of the teachers said that the transfer only occurred partially and 11% said that the transfer did not happened.

More than an half of the teachers made comments concerning the time, mostly informing about the need to have more time than planned to complete all the activities in the session. A quarter of the teachers made references to the materials as necessary resources to the implementation, and one fifth referred changes in the activities as planned in the manual in order to make it more adequate for the children. Some teachers said that they would not change anything in the session.

Focus groups with the teachers

As mentioned previously in the methodology section, the focus groups with the teachers were conducted based on a guide that encompasses a set of questions. The main and most relevant aspects gathered related to each of these questions are presented next to them.

What went well?

- Children enjoyed the stories and the mascots; a group of teachers at the end of the pilot adapted all the stories into a theatre play and are preparing a presentation for all the school community in May; also the music's of the mascots were very useful to introduce the soty and enter in the imaginary scenario of the stories
- Usually don't have materials as detailed as the manual we provided
- Although at the beginning of the training several teachers were worried about how the mindfulness would work out in the class, teachers said they were surprised with the positive response of the children to these activities. Some said that children every day asked for those activities. Some said that they even used the mindfulness activities at home before going to sleep
- Problem solving activities were very well accepted, especially the ones conducted in pairs
- Some teachers were able to infuse the curriculum into the other curricular areas, namely Portuguese (through the stories), physical education (mindfulness), visual arts (paintings, crops,…), environmental studies (mascots and their friends)
- Some teachers found creative ways to promote the school-home communication; for example one teacher sent home the mascots for the parents
- The final period meetings were used as a way to introduce the curriculum and its concept to parents
- The transfer from school to home of the learning outcomes, although not very much referred by the teachers, was at least reported in the case of one children that applied in a concrete situation at home the problem solving methodology (Stop, Think and Solve)

What didn't go well?

- Some teachers did not receive the electronic files of the manual
- Lack of time to do all the activities planned in the manual; also the time of the whole pilot was short
- In the early years, the younger ones tend to follow the others ideas; some activities were difficult especially for this age group
- Parents involvement; lack of feedback of take home activities
- The filling of assessment checklists; teachers mention that they were very difficult for the early years

What did the children most liked in the sessions?

- The mindfulness activities
- The stories
- The mascots

What didn´t the children liked in the sessions?

- Nothing

Have you noticed any improvement in the students' behavior during the pilot?

- Children become more aware that they need to recognize that when they have a problem it's important to use the problem solving strategy - stop and think
- After the mindfulness children become more attentive and quiet in the class
- Changes in the behavior (less problem behaviors, more positive thoughts)
- Some concepts like persistence, cooperation, sharing, helping others, mindfulness and resilience were acquired; also some parents that didn't know the meaning of resilience
- Some teachers referred also the ability to speak for themselves. In one case a girl (immigrant) which used to be a very silent student, hard to speak in front of all the class, was able to speak now and share her opinions
- The positive involvement of children from different nationalities and with disabilities; a children with autism participated in the mindfulness activities and enjoyed a lot referring he would like to be more often in the regular class and to do this kind of activities; the parents of this children were invited to attend the class to observe the child behavior and were positively surprised with his behavior
- The spirit of the class as a group
- Some children open up in the class and addressed some personal problems like domestic violence, socioeconomic issues, lost and delinquency

What could be improved in the RESCUR Program?

- More time for the sessions; several teachers told that the sessions were done in two days or at least more time of the class was necessary to complete the full planning of the session; two of the participant teachers applied the program during all morning across the six weeks, addressing the other curricular area through the RESCUR curriculum
- The manual printed in color, and copies of the activity sheets for all the students; illustrations for the stories; more illustrations in the manual
- More material available to interchange between school and home
- The training could have been accredited
- The teachers refer that it is very important the continuity of the program through the school year
- The assessment checklist should be filled after the activity implementation

- Implementation of the curriculum in older age groups (12-15 years old)
- Systematic supervision

Main difficulties envisioning the future?

- Although some teachers said that the cost could be controlled by adapting some of the activity sheets, the costs of copies for handouts and assessment checklists were referred
- The balance of time for the program application and the academic curriculum, especially this was focused by the teachers from the 3rd and 4th years.
- Also, some teachers said that the school is sometimes overwhelmed with several projects, related with some similar themes such as risk prevention, social skills and the huge amount of tasks that the teacher must do
- The heterogeneity in the class, which will demand a lot of preparation in order to answer to each child individual needs.
- The continuity of the program across different years would imply a strong collaborative work among colleagues, since for some teachers the instability in their placement at the same school in the next year will probably make it difficult to continue from the last year end point.

Results evaluation

The results evaluation, obtained with the teacher's and pupil's assessment checklists are present in the table 7. The values presented in the table refer to the percentages of the "yes" answer option for the children's, and the sum of the "developed" and "consolidated" answer options for the teacher's. As it is possible to see, from the student's assessment, they refer more frequently that they like to do the activities related with the two subthemes topics, comparatively to the perception that they can do it. The first two topics of the two subthemes, defining the problem and generating creative solutions and developing meaning in life and sense of purpose, were mentioned by more than three quarters as the ones they like the most. Looking at the competence perception (I can do it), the three topics from the theme empowerment/autonomy were mentioned by more than half of the students as attained outcomes. In the teacher's assessment, the first topic of creative problem solving and decision making subtheme and the first two of empowerment/autonomy subtheme were rated by the teachers as developed or consolidated by more than an half of the student's. Interestingly, the values obtained in the student's assessment for the competence perception are very similar to the teacher's assessment for the majority of the topics. Only in the second and third topic of empowerment/autonomy subtheme there are more differences between the two sources, being that in the fostering agency and self-efficacy topic, teachers rated more positively than students and the reverse was verified for promoting self-advocacy topic.

Table 7: Percentages obtained in the top values of students and teachers assessment checklist

Subtheme	Topic	Students Assessment		Teachers Assessment
		I like to do it	I can do it	
CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION MAKING	Defining the problem and generating creative solutions	76,1%	49,1%	52,3%
	Evaluating the solutions and decision making	58,4%	46,2%	44,5%
	Implementing and evaluating the solution	70,2%	48,2%	45,8%
EMPOWERMENT/ AUTONOMY	Developing meaning in life and sense of purpose	76,6%	55,1%	56,3%
	Fostering agency and self-efficacy	65,0%	54,6%	67,6%
	Promoting self-advocacy	72,7%	61,6%	43,9%

Focus groups with the children's

The focus groups with the children's included two questions. The main and most relevant aspects gathered related to each of these questions are presented next to them.

What I liked learning was…?

- The word resilience, how to overcome problems
- How to solve problems; identify the problem, think before act, stay calm, plan, look for different solutions, don't give up
- Know myself and others better and become aware of my needs
- To be honest and respect my classmates; we shouldn't bully others
- To be responsible
- How to make a difference, to be a leader
- How to be helpful and to ask for help when necessary
- How to be a good friend and to share
- The meaning of life
- The rights and responsibilities
- How to relax
- Everything

What I would like to improve…?

- To believe in myself and believe that I can do things, recognize that I can, have more confidence
- Reflect better about the future and my future goals
- Be more altruist and less selfish
- Attitudes and behaviours towards my classmates
- The ability to recognize the problems and solve them, think before act

- The ability to try harder and don't give up easily
- Learn with my errors and take responsibility for them
- The ability to talk about myself
- Know how to make a difference
- To help others and the ability to ask for help
- The ability to apologize
- Know how to play better with my classmates
- The ability to relax
- To be more independent
- My academic achievement

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall the Portuguese pilot was highly appreciated by teachers, children's and the direction board of the schools/organizations involved. The majority of participants considered both the training and the class implementation of the RESCUR curriculum very positively. In what concerns the curriculum themes and topics, their relevance has been recognised by teachers, although some aspects related with the need to have more time for the development of the activities, simplifying the learning goals and the need to adapt some activities, and establish a stronger connection between school and home were addressed.

Aspects related with the procedures for evaluation were referred as an aspect that needs to be changed in order to simplify the information and the terminology, especially for the early years age group. The curriculum has the potential to be used across other curricular areas, although the transfer of the learning outcomes have been hard to verify in some students children.

Children's improvements were observed in the classes, namely they were able to cooperate, help others, and recognise the steps for problem-solving, showing more positive behaviours

The active strategies employed were one of the aspects more positively reinforced by the teachers. This is the case of the mindfulness activities, highly appreciated by the children, although at the beginning it was the aspect teachers were more sceptical about.

Some aspect of the manual were highlighted such as the stories and the mascots, the usability of the manual, and the theme in itself (resilience).

From the evaluation of the teachers some weakness were recognized, namely the time for the training and the sessions, the difficulty of some concepts and activities for the early years as well the assessment checklist proposed for this age group. Also the parent involvement should considered one of the aspects that wasn't fully accomplished.

The main recommendations following the evaluations, point to:

- the need of revising the curriculum learning goals/outcomes
- the adequacy of the time to perform the planned activities in order to accomplish the learning goals/outcomes
- the need to revise the language adequacy for the respective age group
- the easiness and simplicity of the final manual in order to be promptly used by the teachers (ready to use)
- the need to include to include more attractiveness to the manual through the illustration of the stories and the activities
- the need to have ready to use material to promote exchange between home and school
- the need to plan in advance an accredited training for teachers with supervision
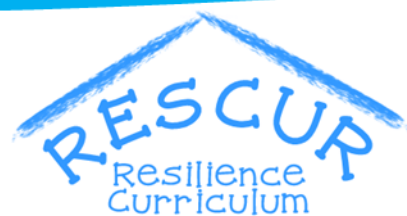
- The need of guarantee the continuity of the program through the full school years (from kindergarten to primary school and if possible through all basic school)

Most of these recommendations have been addressed in the final version of manual after the evaluation and the revision of the editing team.
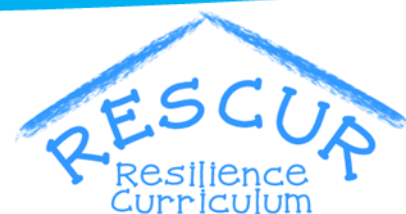
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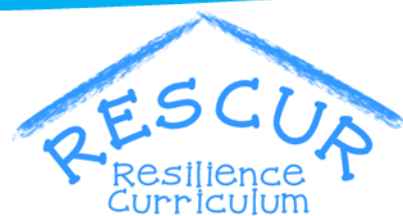
APPENDIX 1

Mascots produced by the children & Images from the pilot implementation

A NOUA FAM
→ SOLUCOÈS PARA
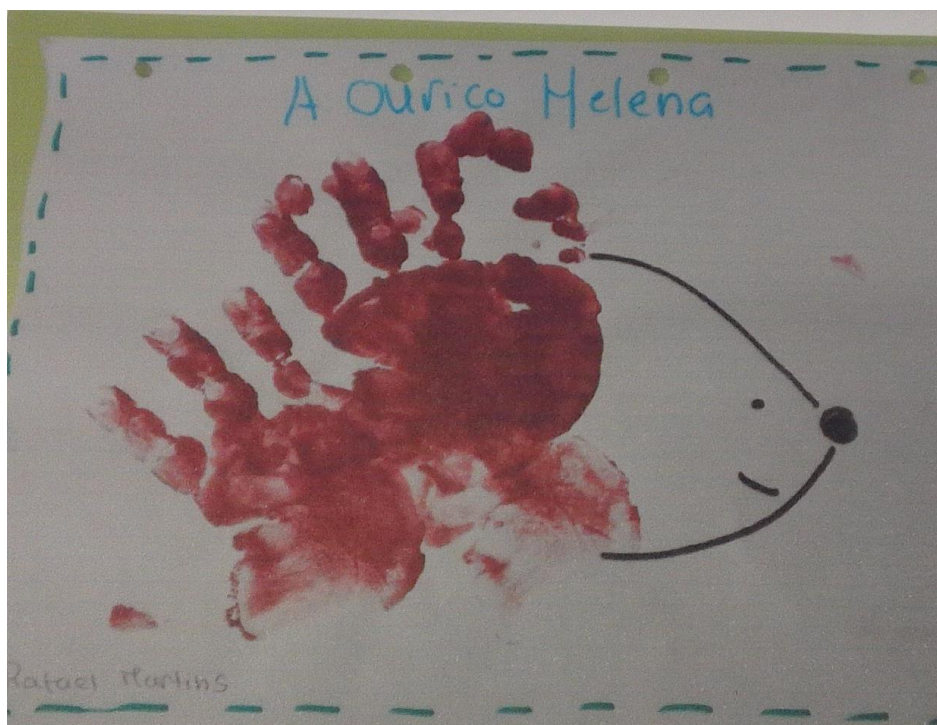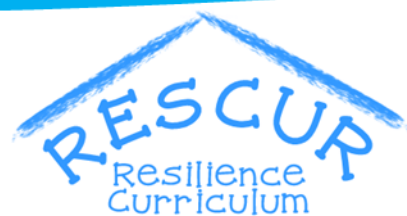
1-0 SAMUEL D
HENRIQUE PORO
BINADO COM A

A Ouriço Helena

Rafael Martins

"O esquilo Samuel pede ajuda"

Gonçalo Costa

"o samuel não conseguia levar o saco
madeira, muito pesado e pediu ajuda ao
veado ??? ele estava com muita pressa,
depois a raposa não conseguia ajudar porque
estava muito cansado. Depois o ??????
ajudou e o samuel ficou espantado com a
?oce dele. E é o fim."

Passaro

13-07-2015 FRANCISCO

samuel

Raposa

veado

UM NINHO PARA DOIS...