

RESILIENCY LABS

Why Resiliency Labs?

During the Covid lockdown periods, we observed increasing mental health problems amongst our "Global Project & Change Management" students at Windesheim. We did not have the capacity or resources to support all the students individually. In 2021, we started an action research project focused on the question "how can we embed building resilience in our program?" The Resiliency Labs were an outcome of this initiative. In the interviews, students expressed that they wanted to be part of co-creating education on this topic. The current form of the Resiliency Labs is the result of a close collaboration of students, student counsellors and educators.

One of the insights we gained during the creation of the Resiliency Labs is that resilience is not something to be cultivated only in the individual, but that a sense of belonging in a learning community is key. The Resiliency Labs are connected to the Inner Development learning journey of students. One of the concepts we explore in this journey is the South African 'Ubuntu': 'I am because we are'. When I am resilient, I contribute to the resilience of my community. In a resilient community, I can develop my personal resilience.

What do the Resiliency Labs look like?

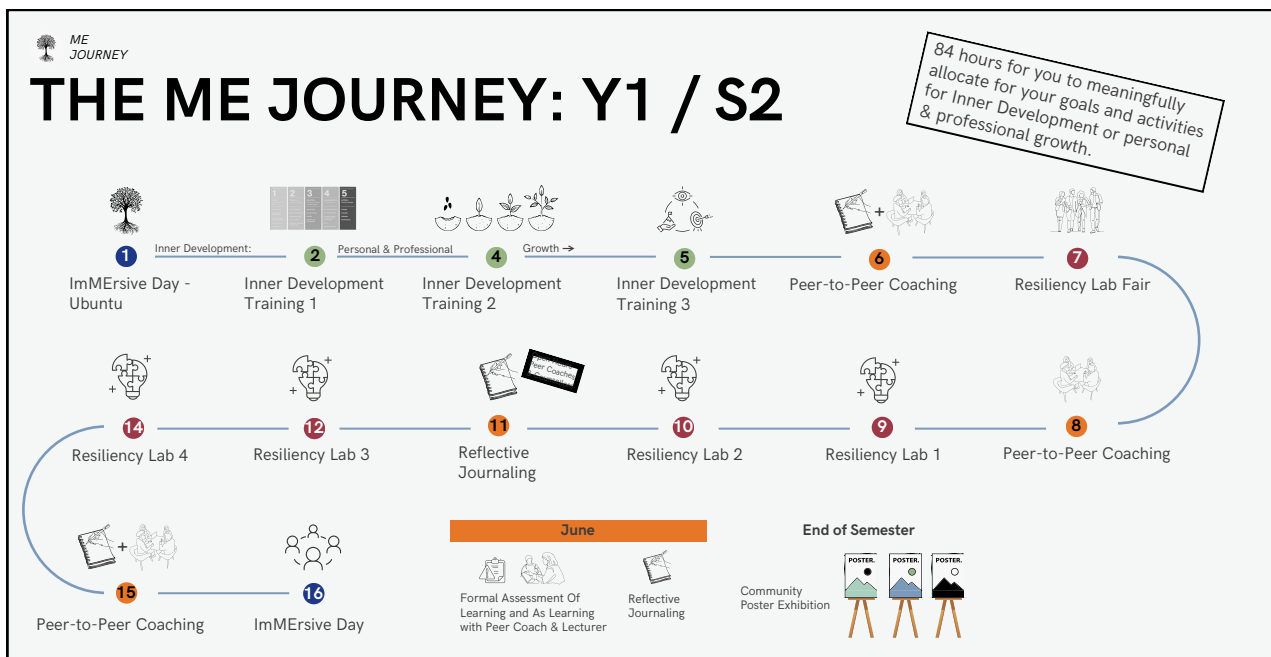
The Resiliency Labs are a series of four experiential workshops that include non-cognitive ways of learning and focus on increasing personal and collective resilience in a broad sense. Students choose the series of workshops they sign up for, with new topics to choose from each semester, and the groups are a mix of 1st and 2nd year students. RL workshops may involve the use of graphic arts, mindfulness and embodiment, physical challenges or experiences in nature. These activities are used as a means to develop personal and collective capabilities such as creativity, collaboration, self-awareness, perseverance, or courage. The workshop, facilitators and topics are largely drawn from the learning community itself - 3d year students, alumni and lecturers all come up with proposals. In this way the entire community is involved in shaping the Resiliency Labs.

For a snapshot impression of the Resiliency Labs, watch this: [Resiliency Labs](#)

How the Resiliency Labs are embedded in the curriculum

The Resiliency Labs are an integrated part of the formal curriculum of the BBA Global Project and Change Management program. They are embedded in the "Inner Development" learning pathway of 5 ECs per semester, which focuses on personal and professional growth of the "whole person" and gives students autonomy in setting their own learning goals and activities. Each semester starts and ends with an Immersive Day to reconnect with yourself, others, and nature, with all 1st and 2nd year students together. The rhythm of the semester repeats 4 times in YR1 and YR2 and also includes Inner Development Training workshops and Peer to Peer Coaching to help students to thoughtfully set their own learning goals and design their own learning process. Each semester, a student chooses a new Resiliency Lab and joins a new group on an experiential learning journey. At the end of the semester, students present their Learning Journey Posters and discuss the insights they gained and give each other feedback and feedforward.

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What is also important to mention here is that the team (the "ME-team") responsible for the "Inner Development" learning pathway (or the "Me Journey" as we also call it) consists of 2 lecturers, 2 student counsellors and 3 students. The content and structure of each semester, including the topics of the Resiliency Labs, is determined by this team. The students are an integral part of the decision-making process and the educational structure. In the most recent semester, the students of this team have taken the initiative to create an analogue journal as a tool that guides the students throughout the semester. This was received with so much enthusiasm that a new version of the 'journal' is now created every semester.

Impact of the Resiliency Labs

After three semesters of running the Resiliency Labs, including the pilot semester, we see strong evidence of increased resilience in the students, and we see this reflected in student evaluations. The student counsellors notice that fewer students come to them with their individual questions or problems. Students seem to solve more problems by relying on each other and the informal support structures they have built. At the same time, we are starting to set up formal data collection structures to truly observe and map the longer-term impact of the Resiliency Labs.

Second-year student: *"I realized that I was only concerned with studying and performing and experienced a lot of stress. The Resiliency Labs have taught me that I am more than just my academic performance as a student."*

Interested?

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