

# Strengthening resilience between reduced pre- and post-award staff: a strategy to avoid burnout without damaging efficiency.

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**Definition of RESILIENCE:**

1 : the capability of a strained body to recover its size and shape after deformation caused especially by compressive stress

2 : an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change

## Background

The Brazilian crisis, mainly over the last 4 years, has resulted in those sectors that have most suffered the consequences of economic and political collapse being education and research (Figure 1).

## In the meantime...

The Albert Einstein Jewish Institute for Education and Research (IIEP) had a great opportunity in 2014 when all RA professionals were united under a sole organizational chart: the Research Support Office (RSO). Since then they have been working together routinely sharing experiences (Figure 2).

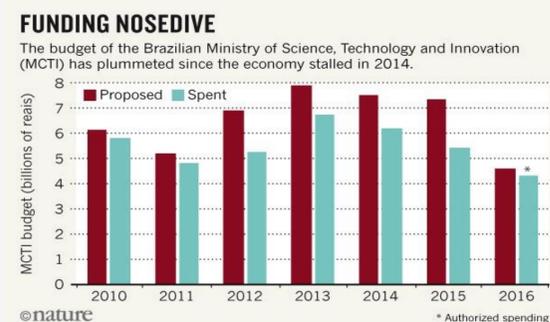


Figure 1: Nature 539, 480 (24 November 2016) doi:10.1038/nature.2016.21014.



Figure 2: Services provided by the RSO.

## The problem that was not a problem at all...

Successful RSO implementation and pent-up demand resulted in RSO employees working harder. **The first step was to let the team know this was a very good thing.** Demand increased because RSO was doing a great job. On the other hand, as we could not close the doors to new customers resilience had to be worked upon.

## Results

With increased awareness the group understood the importance of team communication and collaboration (Figure 3). For example, the pre-award employee offered to take on contract signatures so that the post-award employee got only to care for the financial part of the grant. Even facing reduced government science budgets, our institution has effectively managed submissions and approvals to federal and state funding agencies. With a very compact pre- and post-award team we increased the number of simultaneously ongoing funded research projects by FAPESP\* from 3 to 29, in ten years time (Figure 4).

\*São Paulo State Research Foundation

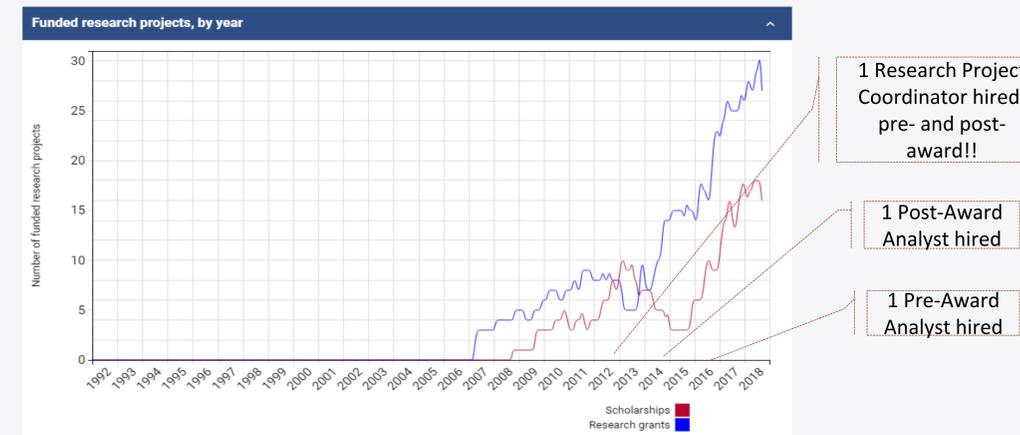


Figure 4: Growth of funded projects by FAPESP and pre and post award staff number of three.



Figure 3: The virtuous cycle of resilience . Some of the aspects developed during our exercise of resilience.

## Conclusion

Through team building, employees understood that stress can be part of every-day work but cannot be the most important part of it. Sharing experiences about how to deal with the problems can diminish them.