



THE ROLE OF EMOJIS IN ADULT EDUCATION FOR VULNERABLE TARGET GROUPS OF ADULTS EXAMPLE OF INTEGRATION EMOJI IN RE.M.I.D.A MODEL

RE.M.I.D.A.» project

Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnership (2019-1-IT02-KA204-063171)

Renewed Models for the Inclusion of Disadvantaged Adults

Author: Tina Kržišnik and Belinda Lovrenčič (RIC Novo mesto)

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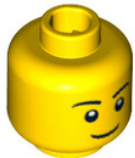
1. INTRODUCTION

The first evidence of emojis were facial expressions made from punctuation symbols like this :-)) which appeared in a magazine more than 130 years ago. (Sexton, 2022) »Some young people may find it hard to believe, but there was once a world without emojis. These bright, little, expressive images didn't come into existence until 1999 when the first ones were created by Japanese artist Shigetaka Kurita. Today, there are more than 3500 emojis ... and counting (Emoji Statistics, 2022). They add a pop of personality to ordinary emails and add nuance to traditional texts. They keep things light; they make us laugh, they help us express ourselves—and kids love them. In many ways, they're a visual language in themselves. « (Dictionary.com, 2019)

Emojis have quickly become part of our daily communication in recent years not only among children but also among adults. Although we see them mostly in interpersonal written communication, they are increasingly appearing in various fields, even used by companies and educational institutions.

Within this publication, you will find useful information and practical tips on how emojis can give added value to the use of RE.M.I.D.A. MODEL in the guidance process for vulnerable groups of adults.

Symbols



IMPORTANT



TIPS



CHALLENGE



FOR CURIOUS

Figura 1: Lego emoji related symbols








2. WHAT ARE EMOJIS AND THE DIFFERENT PURPOSES OF THEIR USE

The word emoji comes from Japanese. *E* means picture and *MOJI* means character. Emoji is therefore a “picture character”. (Zdovc, 2015) “An emoji is an iconic, visual representation of an idea, entity, feeling, status or event, that is used alongside or instead of words in digital messaging and social media. You could call them today’s modern hieroglyphs.” (Evans, 2015) Emojis show or replace emotions - we use them to show how we feel about what we write about or to even encourage emotions.



VISIT <https://emojipedia.org/stats/> to explore diverse emojis and their meaning



Did you know that the French prefer to use  (hearts)? And that Americans like  (bones) the most? Children and adults express emotions in text messages with smileys and other images, which we call emojis. But the company that developed the SwiftKey app found in a survey that users in different countries like different smileys. Brazilians like  (cats), and in the UK, Italy, and Germany they like just plain smileys ( ). (Zdovc, 2015)

And which one do you like best?

The advantage of using emojis is also that it enriches and increases the readability of the text.

“Emojis are being used to enhance, rather than replace words in our digital communications. In spoken language, intonation and gesture provide additional information that is not always easily obtained in spoken messages. We rely on intonation by “puncturing” our spoken statements and providing key advice on what our words mean and whether to ask a question or answer it. In digital communication, emojis fulfil a similar function, enabling the user to add tone and interpret the meaning of the text. They also provide a visual lingua franca that is independent of a speaker’s native

language. The three wise monkey emojis mean the same in English, Italian or Japanese. Of course, emojis are also fun, and can be used to entertain.” (Evans, 2015)



Did you know? The Oxford Dictionary chose a smiley face that sheds tears of joy as the word of the year 2015. According to their findings, this pictogram was the most used of all. (Zdovc, 2015)

The most extensive use of emojis is among young and adults on social media. Moreover, today, almost every company also has social media to communicate with its customers. Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn are great platforms for meeting different audiences and highlighting strong relationships. However, content marketers often use emojis when writing posts and answering various questions or responding to opinions in comments. (Promarketing, 2022)



”Initial results from market research by the company TalkTalk Mobile that used an emoji IQ study that I developed gives us a first glimpse of how the use of emojis is growing. The survey of 2,000 UK residents aged 18-65 found that 80% of Brits are now using these colourful symbols to communicate regularly.” (Evans, 2015)

Emojis are such a big part of our world today and enable quicker, and more efficient communication. Their use is rising even in the field of education, and in the classroom as well. Every classroom is different, but emojis are essentially pictures that can stand in for emotions and ideas. Here are some ways educators may be able to incorporate emojis into the classroom.



3. HOW EMOJIS ARE IMPROVING EDUCATION

What do emojis have to do with education?

The use of emojis in the education process has several benefits, namely:

1. for revealing feelings and emotions and facilitating the expression of emotions or explaining feelings,
2. alleviate coping with emotions,
3. create a relaxed space where we can feel accepted,
4. facilitate communication, especially in the case of diverse barriers,
5. enhancing communication between lecturers, and students.

3.1 IDEAS ON HOW AND WHERE TO USE EMOJIS IN THE EDUCATION PROCESS

1. Providing feedback

Using emojis is also a way to provide accessible feedback in the classroom. Teachers have been putting smiley and frowny faces on student work for decades. Emojis just offer a more nuanced way to do the same thing. As an educator, you can use an emoji system to provide feedback on work. Even educational technology companies are using this strategy in their platforms. Pear Deck, for example, has a “classroom climate” function that helps teachers gather informal data about the mood of the class. (Dictionary.com, 2019)

2. Communicating with classmates

When it comes to squabbles in the classroom or on the playground, emojis can help mediate the situations by helping students understand what others may be feeling and cultivating empathy.

A teacher might ask a student how they think the other person is feeling and have them select an emoji, then discuss why and talk through possible ways to remedy the situation. If an apology is necessary, they may be able to use one specific emoji for this action. (Dictionary.com, 2019)

3. Learning to give constructive criticism

With emojis, there are several different pieces of constructive criticism, as we can use emotional symbols. Emoji can be used to provide more nuance that why is it easier to give “sandwich feedback”. (Dictionary.com, 2019)

4. Practicing warm-ups and wrap-ups

Every experienced teacher knows that warm-up questions are essential as preparation for the entire lesson. With emojis, this warm-up phase can be quick and efficient. A warm-up is a good opportunity to access prior knowledge about the lesson topic and to get attention and increase the motivation of students. There are a couple of ways you can do this using emojis. For example, you could show



a collection of emojis and ask students to write or discuss a response to this prompt: “These emojis represent the topic of today’s lesson. What do you think it is and why?” At the end of the lesson, emojis can be helpful in a wrap-up. A wrap-up or exit ticket is a good way to make sure students understand all the information. You can give students several different emojis and ask them to select the one that best shows how they feel about the lesson. (Dictionary.com, 2019)

5. Writing stories

Emojis can help students write expressively. Another fun way to use emojis in a narrative writing activity is to give students a collection of random emojis. Then, have them write a story incorporating those elements. (Dictionary.com, 2019)

6. Summarizing and analyzing text

Annotate the text using an emoji code. Instruct the students to put emojis at every point in the text where the protagonist gets what they want. Use emoji to explain how a character is feeling and acting at a certain point in the story. (Dictionary.com, 2019)

7. Emoji check-in

Over the past few years, we’ve seen a major focus on social and emotional learning. Emojis are perfect for assessing the mental well-being of students. Some teachers create posters with emojis that represent various emotions. Students touch the emoji that matches their mental state on the way into the classroom, and the teacher has an immediate understanding of the energy and emotional level of the class. (Kozlowsky, 2021)

8. The pitfalls of using emojis

Overall, emojis can be a wonderful addition to any classroom from kindergarten to adult education. They tap into the zeitgeist of our time, allowing students to form deep and lasting learning experiences while improving their social and emotional well-being. They are easy for teachers and students to use and can spice up any lesson.

On the other hand, we must be careful in their use.

Emojis are playful, at times they can be childish or "cheap". It is not best to use “crazy” emojis for luxury goods. Or maybe some that are more abstract - like some solid hearts, circles... Moreover, everyone understands them in different ways - for one, a smiling smiley is “ironic” and can understand as if you’re making fun of him - for another, quite the opposite - laughing smiley means a sympathetic and enjoyable act. (Evans, 2015) So, they can have a double meaning, and this can bring conflicts.





To learn more and get more ideas on how to use emojis in the education process visit: Nine ways to use emojis in the English classroom(<https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/emojis-english-language-classroom>) (Boyd, 2018)





4. TIPS FOR INTEGRATION OF EMOJIS (LEGO® “MINI HEADS”) IN THE RE.M.I.D.A. MODEL

4.1 WHY TO USE EMOJIS (LEGO® “MINI HEADS”) IN THE EDUCATION PROCESS OR GUIDANCE ACTIVITIES

“Teachers don’t need to be emoji experts to use them in the classroom. After all, emoji use is constantly evolving, so it’s almost impossible to know every emoji. My students almost always know more about emoji use than I do, but that knowledge gap offers real opportunities. My questions are genuine. I can press at the edges of explanations and spot inconsistencies. When students explain how an emoji’s context impacts the meaning, I’m listening to learn.” (Sexton, 2022)

Based on our experience in the Re.M.I.D.A. project, emojis in adult education, especially in the field of working with vulnerable adults, proved to be a powerful tool. The benefits of the use are multifaceted. It can be difficult for vulnerable target groups of adults (e.g., migrants, 45+ long-term unemployed, Roma people...) to express how they’re feeling, and emojis can be a great place to start. They can select an emoji that reminds them of how they’re feeling, and counselors can then help them find words that may correlate. Moreover, the use of emojis facilitates communication, especially in the case of diverse barriers (eg language barriers within the target group Roma, immigrants, or in case of limited verbal communication within the target group disabled). With the help of emojis, it is easier to express themselves, to recognize and become aware of their emotional states, and their attitude towards events, people, goals ...

4.2 HOW TO USE EMOJIS (LEGO® “MINI HEADS”) IN THE EDUCATION PROCESS OR GUIDANCE ACTIVITIES

Bellow, you can find some examples and ideas on how to integrate LEGO® emojis into the guidance process, proposed in the Re.M.I.D.A. model and guidelines, for each step of the guidance activity. Trainers can align exercises to the needs of a specific target group.

1. Session Presentation | 5'

Within these exercises at the early beginning participants of the workshop are invited to choose from a common bag one LEGO® emoji, that represents themselves the best and integrate this chosen piece into the model.



Figura 2: A RE.M.I.D.A. model with emoji

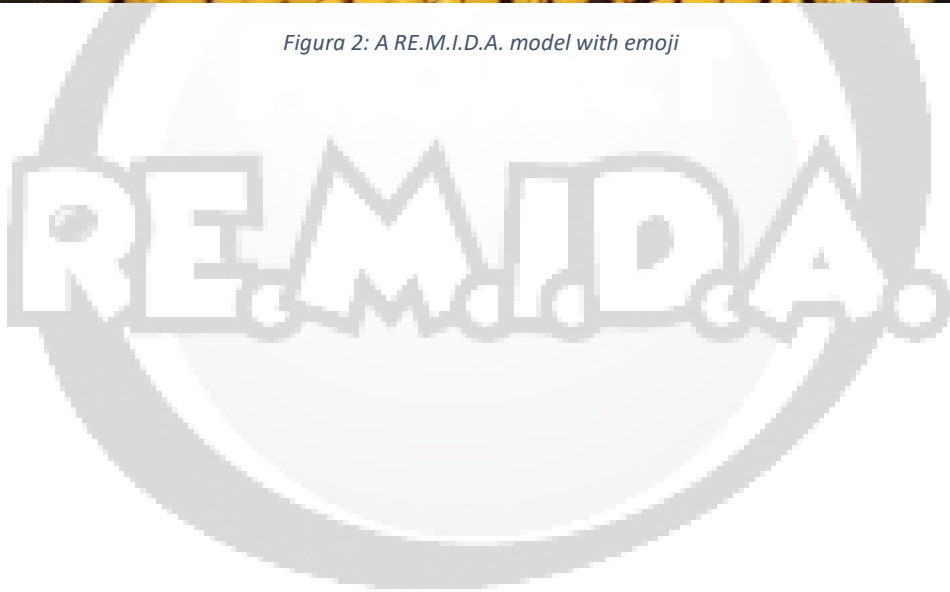




Figura 3: A model built during RE.M.I.D.A. workshop with emoji

2. Skills Building: Tower | 15'

After they have built the tower, participants of the workshop are invited to choose from common bag one LEGO® emoji, to give additional value to the tower presentation. During presenting the tower, they also explain why they have chosen that specific piece.



Figura 4: example of a tower

3. Introduce yourself (at age 5, 20, and now) - Like the scheme above) | 3x15'

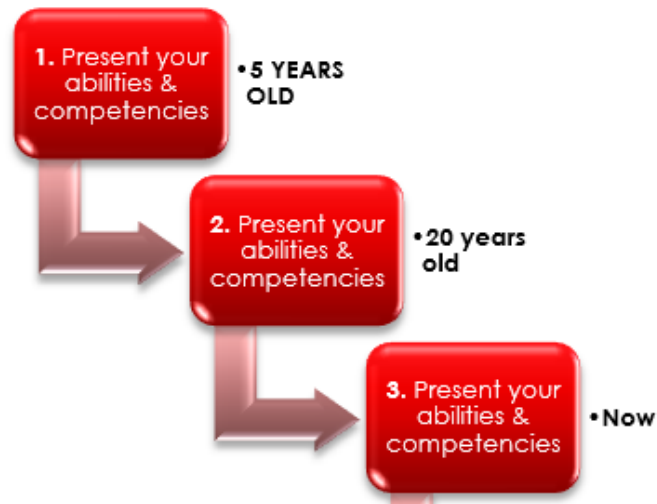


Figura 5: figurative representation of "Introduce yourself" assignment.

After they have built each model that represents them at 5, 20 years and now, participants of the workshop are invited to choose from a common bag one LEGO® emoji, to give additional value to the tower presentation. During presenting the tower, they also explain why they have chosen that specific piece. Though Emojis can express their emotions, attitudes, and feelings at each stage of life.



Figura 6: example of "Introduce yourself" 3D model

4. My achievements | 15'

In this phase, participants can upgrade their models with additional LEGO® emojis to represent their achievements.



Figura 7: upgrading model with emoji

1. Build your aspirations for the future | 10'



Figura 8: figure of "Aspiration" assignment

For warming up, the trainer can ask participants to build the model that represents one complaint that was accruing constantly in the last few months (e.g., I am annoyed because my office is not in order, it is mess everywhere...). They can choose emoji and integrate it into the model.

After that, they transfer their complaint to a future goal. This exercise can continue with visualizations of a future goal, expressed by choosing one of the LEGO® emoji that represent themselves best when achieving this goal.

A mentor can start with a simple statement: "Imagine yourself in 3 years from now. You have achieved your goal. What do you do, where are you, how do you feel?"

After that, they build a model that represents participants' future goals and achievements.

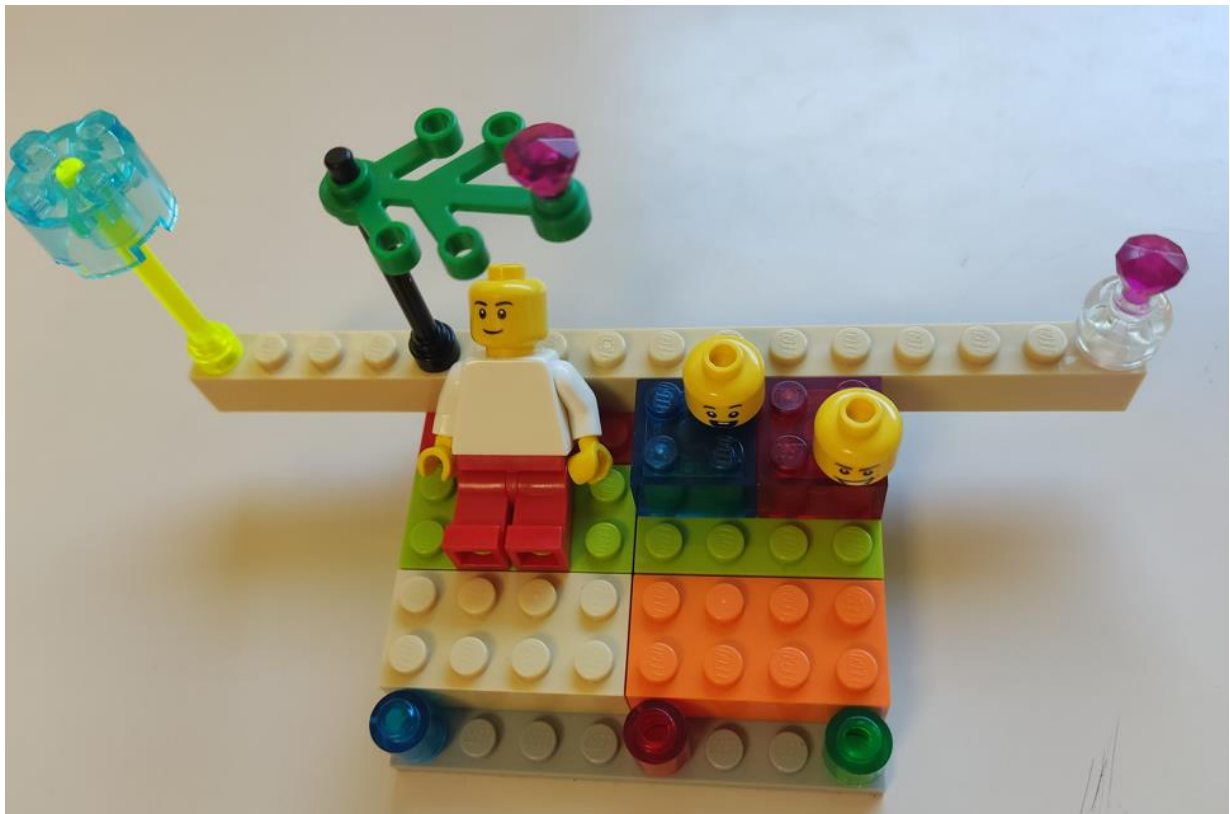


Figura 9: Upgrade 3D model

2. My support system & Action plan | 15'



Figura 10: figurative representation of "Action plan" assignment

In this phase, participants can upgrade their models with additional LEGO® emojis (mini heads) to represent persons who can help them to realize their goals.

Proposed additional exercise:

Think about the person from the past/or present who caused negative feelings which made you feel uncomfortable and caused you negative emotions. Create a model using emojis. Represent your model to others.



Figura 11: model from additional exercises

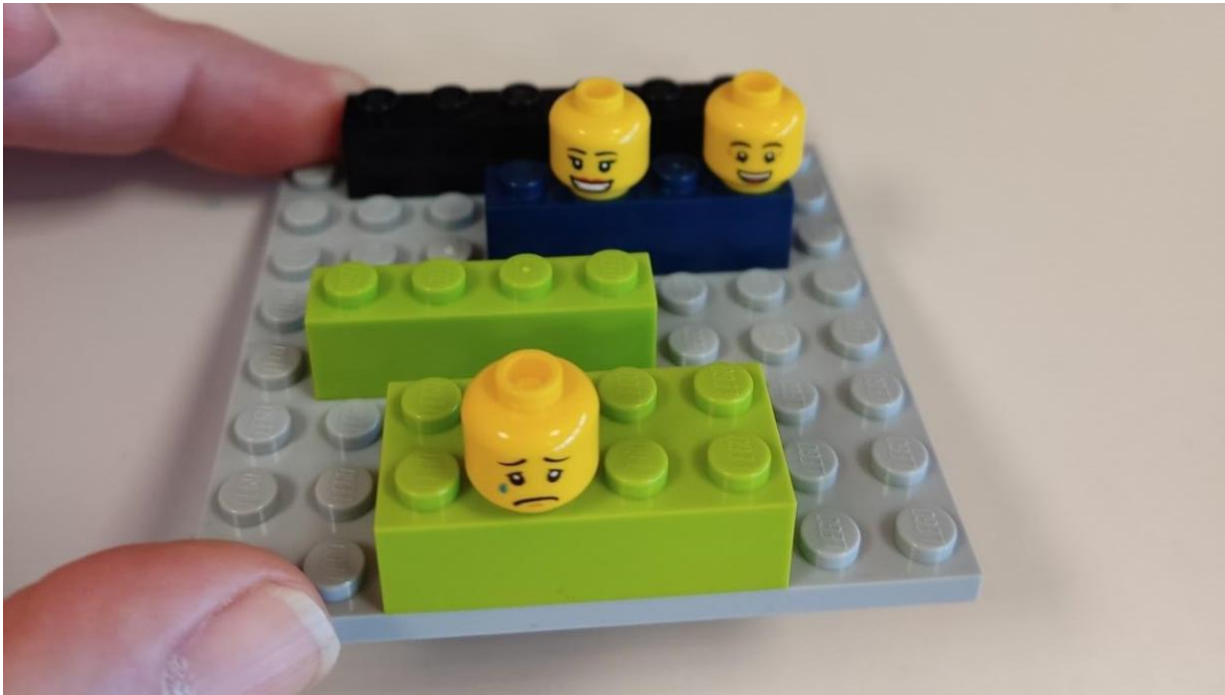


Figura 12: model from additional exercises (2)

Now think of a person with whom you feel comfortable and relaxed. Create a model using emojis. Represent your model to others.



Figura 13: model from additional exercises (3)

Now compare the first and the second model. How are the two models different?

Which persons will be involved in the realization of your future goals (the first or second model)? Why? Explain. How can people (the second model) help you on your path in the future?

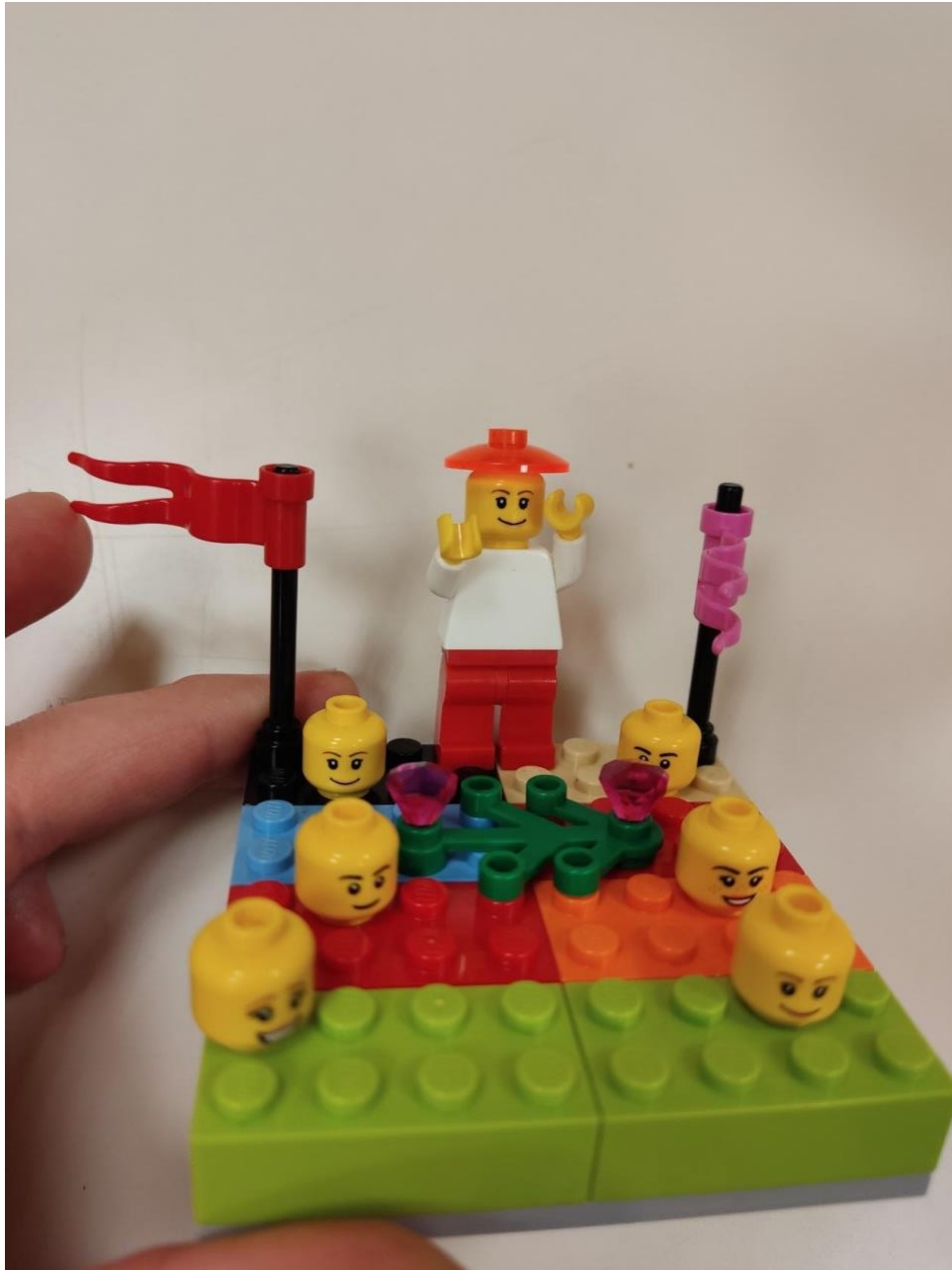


Figura 14: model from additional exercises (4)



Figura 15: model from additional exercises (5)



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