



# LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® MODEL ADAPTION FOR RE.MI.D.A.

RE.M.I.D.A.» project

Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnership (2019-1-IT02-KA204-  
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Renewed Models for the Inclusion of Disadvantaged Adults



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**Date:** November 2020

**Result no.:** R4





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## 1. INTRODUCTION ON THE RE.MI.D.A. PROJECT

The project RE.M.I.D.A. aims to tackle the problem of socio-occupational exclusion of disadvantaged adults over 45. Neither young nor old, often without parental support or the possibility of early retirement, trapped on the fringes of the labour market in a condition of chronic “inactivity”. They are the “older” unemployed, those who have lost their jobs after crossing the 45-year threshold.

The project “RE.M.I.D.A. – Renewed Models for the Inclusion of Disadvantaged Adults” was designed with the aim of supporting the social and working inclusion of adults 45+ at risk of exclusion by defining and testing an innovative model of intervention, aimed at achieving personal empowerment and enhancing the informal and non-formal skills of this target group.

The target group of RE.MI.DA. is composed of operators working for the social inclusion of disadvantaged adults; adults 45+ at risk of social-work exclusion; managers of adult education, training, assessment and guidance organizations; experts / researchers in adult education methodologies; and representatives of the Public Administrations.

Main expected results of RE.MI.D.A. are:

Definition of an innovative model of intervention for the personal empowerment of 45+ adults at risk of socio-professional exclusion. This model comes from adaptation of the Lego Serious Play® principles to the adult 45+ target and its alignment with consolidated methodologies for adult education, training assessment and orientation.

Upskilling of operators of adult education centres, engaged in activities in favour of adults 45+ at risk of social exclusion.

Support to European processes for enhancing informal and non-formal skills of this target group.



## 2. ADULT EDUCATION – A SHORT INTRODUCTION

The concept of “continuing education” is linked to a learning process that is repeated on an ongoing basis with the aim of acquiring knowledge, skills and competences so that the individual can develop socially, culturally and economically. The societal changes created the need for continuous education and lifelong learning in the whole professional life of each employee.

Further, in many cases we are confronted with people in need of a second 'opportunity' that will allow them to restart their professional career, or with groups in danger of social exclusion, usually found outside the borders of the traditional education system that need an entry point for the labour market.

In addition, “digitalisation, globalisation and population ageing are having a profound impact on the type and quality of jobs that are available and the skills required to perform them. The extent to which individuals, firms and economies can reap the benefits of these changes will depend critically on the readiness of adult learning systems to help people develop and maintain relevant skills over their working careers.” (<http://www.oecd.org>)

To be able to delve deeper into these concepts, one has to start by looking at the definition of "adult education". In this direction, two basic in-depth definitions emerge, the first being United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) that “Adult education is any educational process, of any content, level or method, specifically targeting individuals who are regarded as adults by the society to which they belong to improve their technical or professional qualifications, further develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge with the purpose to complete a level of formal education, or to acquire knowledge, skills and competencies in a new field or to refresh or update their knowledge in a particular field. This also includes what may be referred to as ‘continuing education’, ‘recurrent education’ or ‘second chance education’” (<http://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/adult-education>).

The second definition that relates to adult education and defines quite thoroughly the concept is from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) "Adult education refers to any learning activity or program deliberately designed by an educational institution to meet any needs or interest that may arise at any stage of a person's life beyond the age of compulsory education (<http://www.oecd.org>).

In order to complete the conceptual definitions of adult education we must also refer to the concept of an adult (Karagiorgis, 2007):

- An adult is anyone 21 years of age, married or responsible for his own leaving;
- Adults are people who are considered adults in their own society;
- Someone who is assuming social roles of adulthood such as: employee, spouse, voter, parent, differentiates adults from children better than age.

Generally, adults are individuals characterized by social maturity, a tendency for self-determination and voluntary behaviour, responsibility, and a sense of perspective (Rogers A., 1999). So, for them

learning is a dynamic process that needs to be applied and related to real life problems and how to handle various “business” cases, so the trainer must not approach the topics theoretically or academically, but in a practical way.

According to the literature (Kokkos A., 2005) adults:

- They are participating voluntarily.
- They are in an on-going personal development process.
- They come to education with specific goals.
- They have experiences, values, prejudices and attitudes in which they have invested emotionally.
- They have competing interests and face obstacles to learning.
- They have established learning patterns and a specific learning pace.

## 2.1 BASIC PRINCIPLES OF “ADULT EDUCATION”

When examining the issues affecting Adult Education, there is often a discussion of which are those key principles on which the design of “Adult Education” programs should be based. These principles should not only cover the gaps of school education, but also to develop new competences and skills and/or to upgrade existing ones (upskilling). All the above are needed, in order to ensure that the best conditions apply for tackling social exclusion, for integrating these people into the labour market and, as a result, to have active citizens in a modern society.

According the existing literature the basic principles that should be employed when designing educational programs for Adult Education are:

1. **Relevance:** Adults seek knowledge related with their interests. They have specific needs that need to be fulfilled with their participation in the educational program, resulting their personal development.
2. **Active:** Adults learn energetically. They seek their participation in the learning process, thereby contributing to the exploration of the subject being studied at any given moment.
3. **Criticality:** Adults judge the knowledge offered. For accepting new knowledge, it must seem "reasonable" to them.
4. **Interactivity:** Adult learners want to be involved in what they are learning. The trainer/teacher is for an adult an equal person simply carrying more knowledge, so he/she will not hesitate to ask him questions, to engage in a discussion with him and to search for parallel material with him in order to delve deeper into the subject.
5. **Limitations:** An adult has external limitations that may make it difficult (or simply more difficult) to participate in a training program. These restrictions are usually too strong to ignore, such as family and work obligations, social relationships, as they absorb much of their time and energy.
6. **Adaptability:** Every adult learns in his/her own way and has its own learning style. During all the previous years of his life, every adult has shaped his/her own learning and assimilation strategies. So, every adult needs a personalized teaching.

## 2.2 ADULT LEARNING THEORIES

Adult learning is the result of a complex and dynamic interaction between a range of psychological, personal and environmental factors. These factors influence both the motivation that drives an adult into learning and the way he or she achieves it. Although the normal learning process does not differ between an adult and a child, adult students learn in a different way than the minors. The main forms of adult teaching and learning are:

1. Self-directed learning: Much of adult learning is done on their own initiative, although all educational policies in all countries are trying to facilitate trainees in this endeavour. However, most of this process is accomplished through self-directed learning, that is, learning in which the subject is responsible for its design, implementation and evaluation. Adults focus on the process in which they:
  - a. Control their own learning;
  - b. Set their learning goals and objectives;
  - c. Find the appropriate learning resources;
  - d. Decide on the learning methods that best serve them and; Evaluate their progress.

Self-directed learning can be successfully combined with learning through projects as they have two things in common: the student undertakes to design the learning activities himself and is actively involved in solving any problems encountered during the learning process (Kapsalis, Papastamatis, 2000).

2. Critical Thinking: Adults have their own educational and professional history and have their own opinions on the learning topics. This is something that cannot be ignored and therefore the teaching approach should always emphasize on critical thinking (Kokkos-Lionarakis, 1998).
3. Personalized learning: Personalization today means recognizing the individual differences of students, and in particular their different social and cultural backgrounds, different experiences and different approaches to learning. These differences affect learning and therefore should be taken into account.
4. Experience learning: Experience supports the learning process of adults.

In most learning programs trainers employ active learning techniques. Active learning can be described as the process of 'learning by doing'. It is an educational process in which learners are active partners in the learning process and not passive recipients of knowledge. Individuals or groups learn best when they are actively involved in their own learning. When it comes to teaching methods, different approaches and methods are required. The methods chosen should provide opportunities for the learner to think, act and reflect. Active learning methods include:

- Exchange of ideas,
- Role playing,
- Exchange of Opinions,
- Discussion and
- Project-based work

### 3. ADULT EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES

The need for better-trained and more motivated employees, who will be able to act independently and apply their skills in addition to use of flexible technologies and work processes, has given impetus to new methods of developing human resource skills. In many cases, employers do not require as a qualification the simple existence of competent academic knowledge but also practical knowledge and application of this knowledge in the field of work. Employers are also looking for a set of behavioural skills that are not taught in formal education nor are they part of traditional academic analytical programs, such as problem-solving skills, communication skills, and interpersonal and leadership skills (Carnevale, 1994). These skills can be developed through adult-oriented training programs, which are developed and implemented by specialized adult educators.

Adult education, as presented in previous sections, is a complex concept and the ultimate goal is not only to educate citizens but also to change attitudes and perceptions, to exclude excluded groups from society, to train executives and many other goals. Understandably, adult education consists of many different strategies that appeal to different audiences. For this reason, it is necessary to have the necessary strategy that will be based on the appropriate principles.

Relevant strategies have been drawn up, having as objective a clear presentation of the different conditions in which adult education operates as well as the necessary corresponding planning. It is clear, that we cannot have the same design in an adult refugee education program in the Greek language and an adult education program for business executives done internationally. Therefore, it is obvious that we must address different groups with different needs, separately.

In order to achieve the best results, we need to design educational programs that are based on different educational strategies. Educational strategies that can be used are:

- **Strategy for supplementary education and training**

It is commonly accepted that the modern education system has many gaps. Adult education is coming to fill these gaps. We must not forget that the purpose of basic education is to provide general knowledge applicable to different professional domains. Therefore, the provision of special knowledge can be done through the VET education which is called to fill the gap left by formal education (Vergidis, 2008).

- **Strategy of scientific specialization**

According to Fulcher and Scott (2007) a special element of adult education is the fact that it is called upon to cover rapid changes in cognitive objects wherever and whenever these exist. In this case, the scientific specialization concerns educational programs that relate to the coverage of short-term needs of business executives and employees in leading industries, such as computer science. This strategy is probably the most common approach used for VET training today.

- **Strategy for social inclusion and coping with exclusion.**





It is an approach that has been developed in recent years. In this case, we are talking about a strategy that uses adult education to achieve special objectives, such as managing vulnerable social groups such as immigrants, drug addicts and others. The goal is to integrate vulnerable groups running the risk of exclusion allowing them to join the economically active population (Vergidis, 2008).

- **Strategy for personal and socio-cultural development.**

This strategy concerns training of citizens having as objective the individual, cultural and social development of the trainees. The ultimate goal of this strategy is the active participation of citizens in cultural events, and in various social events (Vergidis, 2008).

RE.M.I.D.A. education program has to adopt a strategy that combines:

- Strategy for social inclusion and coping with exclusion
- Strategy for personal and socio-cultural development

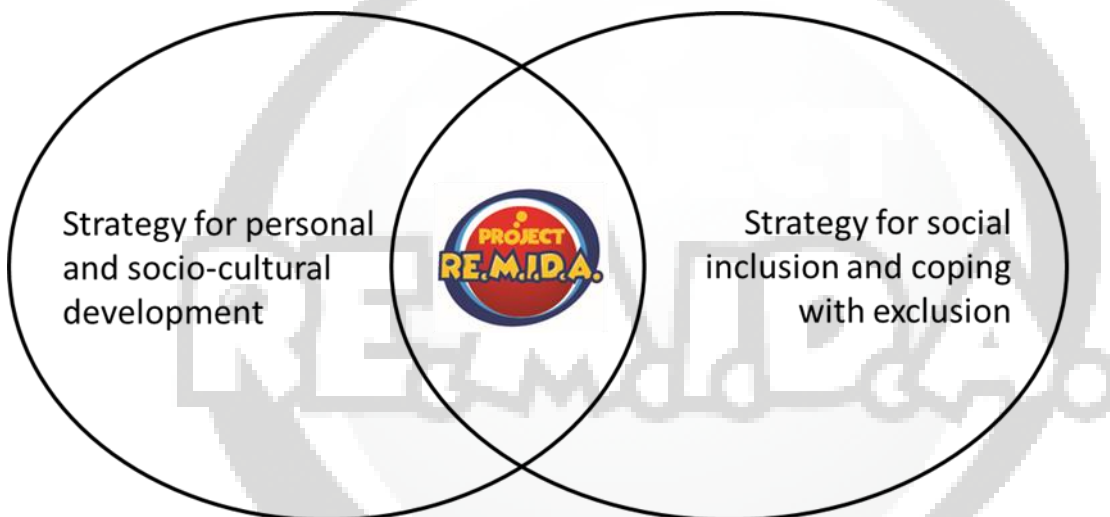


Figure 1: Re.M.I.D.A. strategy

## 4. THE CONCEPT OF EMPOWERMENT

The concept of empowerment is a multifaceted term, widely used, the definition of which varies, depending on the researchers and the specific context (educational, social, cultural, political, psychological, etc.) used each time.

Empowerment can be perceived as a process, as a product, as an approach or as a goal. Empowerment is considered, either as a personal process through which the individual takes control of his life, or as a political process in which human rights and social justice of a group of people is guaranteed by society.

According to Lather (1991), empowerment is a process in which somebody is committed to himself and not something that is done to somebody else. Even, according to Zimmerman (1990), empowerment is defined as the act that makes people able to act on their own. In order to achieve their self-determined goals. When individuals are psychologically empowered, there is a change in their attitudes, conditions and behaviours, which leads to a positive change in the orientation of values, resulting in improved self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-awareness.

The Leach et al. (2001) argue on the concept of empowerment by presenting three different approaches.

- According to the first approach, the trainee can be empowered as an individual in order to make personal decisions about a course of action. This empowerment approach has its roots in Adult Education that emphasizes self-management and self-help.
- In the second approach, empowerment is linked to broader social, economic and cultural rights. Individuals are active citizens who seek empowerment within a recognized framework of inequality and in relation to a common purpose.
- Finally, the third approach recognizes the important role of society, and the structure of inequalities within the society.

Regarding the way in which empowerment occurs in individuals, Kaminski et al. (2000) presents two theories.

The first theory suggests that people are empowered by transforming their **attributions for success and failure, rather than developing new skills**. The definition of empowerment used in this theory is mainly based on the person's activation and mobilization. Further, people become stronger when other people do things for them, serve them, rather than when they do something for themselves.

The second theory of empowerment presents empowerment **as a long-term Adult Education task** and as a development task aimed at increasing individuals' participatory ability. According to this theory, empowerment is synonymous with skills, personal effectiveness, personal competences, mutual support, self-confidence, etc.



Socially excluded and oppressed people, according to Freire, form distorted consciences and embrace values and standards that do not belong to the reality and therefore the role of Adult Education is to liberate students so that be able to challenge their assumptions and act for social change. Freire's theory is an Adult Education approach that focuses on critical awareness. The goals of Freire's empowering pedagogy are to connect personal development with social life, developing skills, academic knowledge, information retrieval and critical curiosity about society, inequality and change. In his philosophy he places the individual at the centre of life so that he can give meaning to his personal situations and the social environment in which he lives. This process enables the individual to develop a critical awareness and act accordingly. More specifically, according to Freire, somebody must reconsider his experiences and redefine his existence, in terms of knowledge and action, a process which for Freire is entitled "cycle of awareness". The "cycle of awareness" consists of three stages that are interconnected and which are directly related to the role of the trainer.

In the first stage, known as investigation, new concepts, values and institutions that are coded are discovered. At this stage, trainees find issues that concern them and are related to their educational process.

In the second stage, the codification stage, the characteristics of an existing situation with which the trainees are connected are determined. The identification is done through specific scenarios and words that give meaning to the situation which is coded in order to be understood by the trainees.

In the third and last stage of decodification, the existing values are reconstructed in the context of the decoded experience. Decoded experience is important for this process because it shows the need to understand a situation that the oppressed are experiencing but do not really know. Freire decoding consists of four stages: imprinting, deconstruction, restructuring, and transformation (Freire, 2018)

Kieffer in his study described four stages through which individuals move from a sense of inability to achieve participatory ability and empowerment.

These stages are:

- Era of Entry. During this period, participation is exploratory, unknowing, and unsure. Individuals are first discovering their political muscles and potential for external impact.
- Era of Advancement. The three major aspects of empowering evolution in this phase are the centrality of a mentoring relationship, the enabling impact of supportive peer relationships within a collective organizational structure, and the cultivation of a more critical understanding of social relations. Much like the initial period of reaction, this phase also encompasses at least a year of intensive engagement and reflection.
- Era of Incorporation. In this period, self-concept, strategic ability, and critical comprehension substantially mature. Through continuing struggle, participants confront and learn to contend with the permanence and painfulness of structural or institutional barriers to self-determination.



- Era of Commitment where participants continue to struggle with integrating new personal knowledge and skill into the reality and structure of their everyday life-worlds





## 5. LSP OPEN SOURCE: THE ORIGINS OF THE METHOD

The LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® is a methodology built upon the possibility to have a tool to unlock imagination and innovation within the company. In 1996 the LEGO Group realized that a solution might be found in the LEGO® System in Play itself:

In 2010 the LEGO Group decided to offer the Methodology as a community-based model under the Creative Commons License Deed. The Open-Source document gives a description of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology and philosophy.

Nowadays the LEGO Group only guarantee the quality of the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology and the physical material, while practitioners are responsible for the quality of the delivery of the actual workshops based on the methodology.

The LEGO SERIOUS PLAY method is employed by start-ups and multinational corporations alike to maximize synergy among teams and throughout organizations. For leaders looking to boost effectiveness and see better results.

### 5.1 LSP FUNDAMENTALS: PRINCIPLES AND THEORIES

The method nurtures the idea that everyone in an organization can contribute to outcomes because bricks encourage exploration and suspend hierarchy for better, more effective communication

LSP was born from the fields of psychology and behavioural science. The 2 most important theories were developed by Piaget and Papert through observing the behaviour and learning activities of children, but Papert believes that these findings are equally applicable to adults.

1. Constructivism – by Jean Piaget. Knowledge is not simply “acquired” by children bit by bit, but constructed, based on their experience in the world, into “knowledge structures.” Children are not just passive absorbers of experience and information, but active theory builders;
2. Constructionism – by Seymour Papert. Constructivist learning happens especially well when people are engaged in constructing something external to themselves because they simultaneously construct theories and knowledge in their minds. This new knowledge enables them to build more sophisticated things out in the world, which yields still more knowledge, and so on, in an iterative process.

By building visual 3D metaphors, LSP unlocks innovative solutions through storytelling, and experimentation. In this way play is a serious activity that can unleash imagination so sorely needed in the competitive context we’re living in. The term imagination refers to three meanings: to describe something, to create something, to challenge something. The interactions among these three kinds of imagination are the source to the change process.



## 5.2 LSP WORKSHOP SESSION APPLIED TO GUIDANCE ACTIVITY FOR DISADVANTAGE PEOPLE

The session designed using the bricks is aimed to support the unemployed during the guidance process. The session follows the steps described as a proposal which is not a strict process but a general guideline.

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### *Session Presentation | 5'*

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#### **Instructions**

This activity is about learning by doing, or better, learning by playing. And like any game, it also has its own rules.

1. It is not a training or a tutorial but a moment of common sharing.
2. Don't be afraid to say what you think, because there are neither right nor wrong answers, there are only answers that say something
3. It's not a race! The models must not be beautiful, but must represent something.
4. Everyone must participate equally
5. It is important to respect the timing I give you. The measure of time is 1 or 2 songs.
6. Think with your hands
7. Enjoy the workshop!

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### *1.0 Skills Building: Tower | 15'*

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The first activity introduces participants to the Lego set and bricks.

#### **Instructions**

1. Build a tower using the bricks you have in your bag. You can use all of them or just some of them but you have to build a tower as much as taller than you can and with the minifigure on top.
2. Share your model - about 1 min each

#### **Materials**

Same materials to all the participants. You can organize small bags with 20 bricks per person.



## Goals

This exercise leads the following reflections: there is not only one perspective, but there are different perspectives. To obtain an effective collaboration it is important to guarantee 100% participation, cooperation and engagement.

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### *2.1 Introduce yourself | 45'*

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This activity is about the presentation of each participant sharing some reflections about themselves and their professional profiles.

## Instructions

Build a model that explores the characteristics of your Identity today.

You could explore:

1. Professional skills
2. Strengths and weaknesses
3. Values

Do not disassemble it.

## Goals

Support the participant to focus their professional profile.

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### *2.2 Build your aspirations for the future | 30'*

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## Instructions

Build your aspirations: what is the most important achievement you want to reach, your goal. You can think about where do you want to be in 5 years.

Add this new model to the previous one, modifying, changing or rearranging it.

In the sharing time you will also allowed to make “safe questions” to others, “What does that brick represent?” can be used to extract more of the story from the model maker.

## Goals

A focus upon participant’s dreams reflecting about how much they are tangible when they became objective.



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### *3.0 Big picture of the goals | 30'*

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#### **Instructions**

It's time to move from individual models to a collective model. Put all your models close to the others in order to share that everybody has his own goals. You will find similitudes or categories.

Once the construction is finished, a volunteer will share to the other members of the group the story in order to be all convinced and aligned on the story.

#### **Goals**

Reflections about similitudes and categories related to the goals among the participants even though.

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### *4.0 The professional action plan | 30'*

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#### **Instructions**

Build the most important element related to your professional action plan. Build what you would need to achieve your goal

#### **Goals**

The activity aims to define resources or obstacles relevant to carry on a professional action plan

The activity ends enlightening the most important elements could have an impact on the professional action plan.

The action plan will be detailed with different tools, not with the LSP





## Facilitation and facilitator

A facilitator has a wide range of tasks to perform in order to 'make things easier' for people who participate in the LSP session.

The most relevant Facilitator's skills are:

### 6.1 COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- Effective facilitation is predicated on clarity, staying with an active listening and staying neutral on content while participant share Empathy.
- Make sure that people are not left out of the flow of the discussions.
- During the discussions is very useful to apply Divergent and Convergent Thinking. First, you help the participants broaden their horizons and generate new ideas or solutions. Then you help them to focus on the most relevant aspect of their topic

### 6.2 SESSION MANAGEMENT

The factors to consider when designing a workshop session:

- Time constraints and breaks
- The bricks: the set and the bags available for the participants
- The number of participants: Above a certain group size, it gets difficult to have a discussion where everyone is involved.

### 6.3 SETTING MANAGEMENT

The room and environment must guarantee an active participation. The facilitator must plan a proper setting removing barriers to let people move to go to the brick table and back. Moreover, everyone can sit seeing and hearing each other.



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