

SERIOUS WORK

HOW TO FACILITATE MEETINGS & WORKSHOPS USING THE LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® METHOD



APPLICATIONS INCLUDE:
GOAL SETTING
TEAM BUILDING
IDEA GENERATION
VALUES & BEHAVIOURS
SHARED VISION

SEAN BLAIR, MARKO RILLO & PARTNERS



SERIOUS WORK



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Connect

 @SeriousWrk | Sean@Serious.Global

SERIOUS WORK

HOW TO FACILITATE MEETINGS & WORKSHOPS USING THE LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® METHOD

with conscious incompetence

Written & designed by

SEAN BLAIR

MARKO RILLO

With help from

OUR PARTNERS

Production: SEAN BLAIR

Publisher: PROMEET

Partners

**SeriousWork is co-authored by nine partners
who wrote part 6 this book**



Camilla Nørgaard Jensen
USA/Denmark



Dieter Reuther
USA



Kristina Nyzell
Sweden



Mercedes Hoss
Germany



Kim Pong Lim
Singapore



Patrizia Bertini
Italy



Eli de Friend
Switzerland



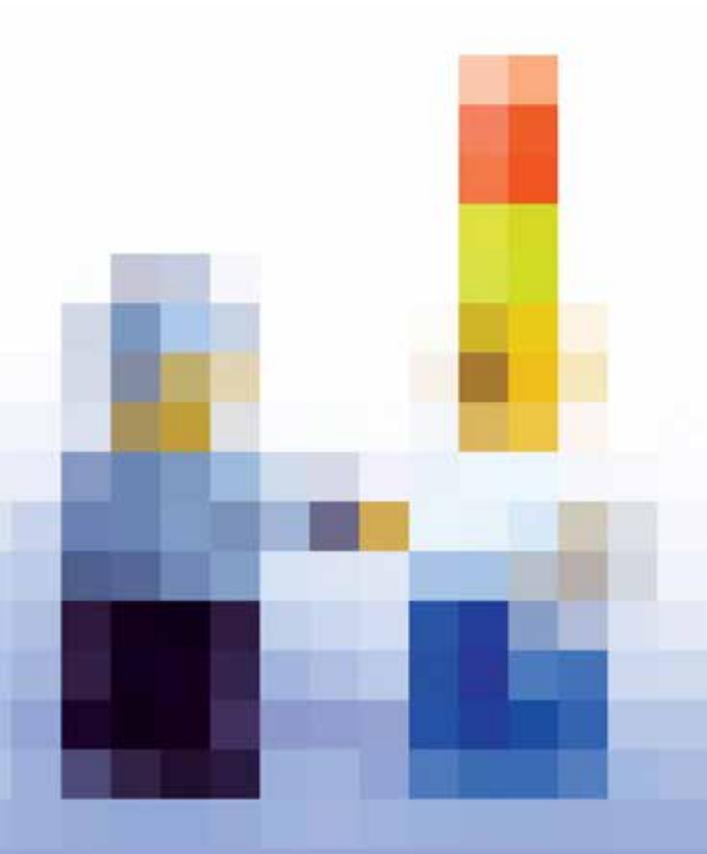
Maria Stashenko
Russia



Oliver Knapman
China

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Foreword

A message from the future

It was an unlikely tale. LEGO - the company who saved the World! Really, it was that awesome!

No one predicted it, no one saw it, not even the people who pioneered the method. And no one could have been more surprised than the executives who ran this toy company. By early 2018 they had mastered selling LEGO® theme kits to children all over the world. That's what LEGO was famous for.

But then a decision made at the LEGO Group some 20 years earlier started to have unexpected and positive consequences.

The insane idea that Johan Roos and Bart Victor had in 1996 began to help people see, communicate and understand in new ways.

Hundreds of thousands of people started using LEGO® Serious Play®. A combination of LEGO® Serious Play® with the wisdom of higher level human-to-human communication processes, and insights unlocked through advances in brain science was powerful.

People finally had *purposeful* conversations. Leaders *engaged* their teams in a truly *participatory way*. Everybody started telling stories that had deeper meaning. They could reflect deeper thoughts and beliefs. They used colourful metaphors to engage emotionally.

They started understanding consequences of their aspirations. They became able to see and understand systems.

As LEGO® Serious Play® became a widely used and legitimate tool, more people could explore purpose, vision and plans systemically.

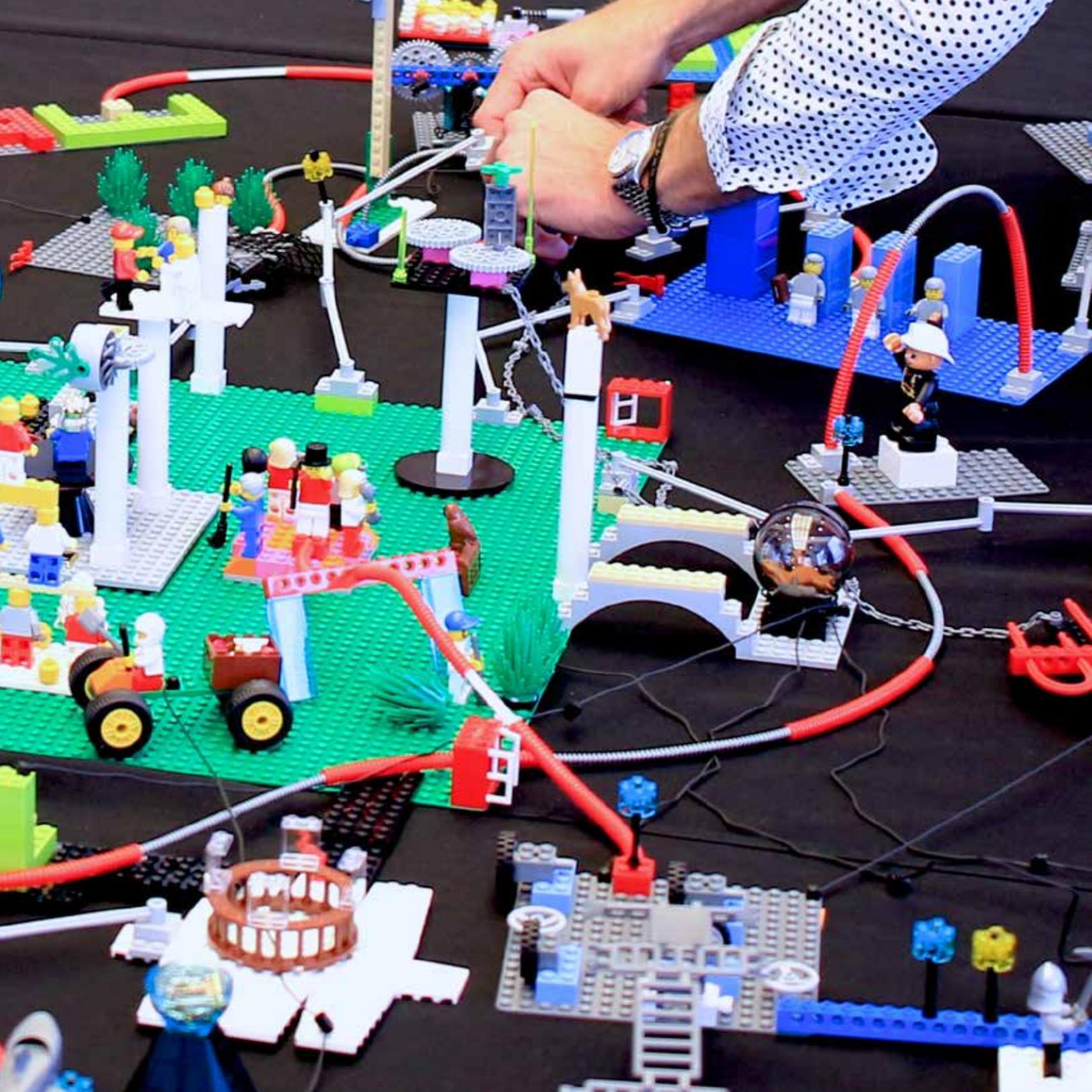
And the models spoke back, not literally of course, but people were wholly able to explore the full pictures of each other's perspective and how they influenced each other.

Models of interconnected systems showed consequences that had been impossible to observe before. This enabled human to human and heart to heart exchange on root causes.

Intangible ideas, attitudes, influences and beliefs took form in LEGO® models and became part of the language and method of cutting edge of modern planning.

LEGO® Serious Play® became as common as marker pens and flipcharts. Bricks were found at offices of executives and leaders, coaches and consultants, teachers and trainers, administrators and policy makers, researchers and scientists, therapists and thinkers, innovators and engineers. Everybody who needed to think-together had them.

The early pioneers of '96 created LEGO® Serious Play®. The group that followed developed it. Then it was made Open Source and a new wave of thousands of practitioners took it to a whole new level. Who saw that one coming?



Preface

2016. LEGO® Serious Play® is thriving.

How is it that a child's toy, has become a serious strategy tool used by some of the world's best known organisations? And what might be the relevance of this method in your work?

This practical book is intended for people who run meetings: leaders, managers, facilitators and coaches, who are seeking ways to help teams work-together well.

A very brief history of LEGO® Serious Play®

The serious play story began¹ in 1996 when Institute for Management Development (IMD) professors Johan Roos and Bart Victor created the "serious play" concept and process as a way to enable managers to describe, create and challenge their views of their business. LEGO joined the story during an IMD program for the top 300 leaders in the LEGO® Company.

Roos and Victor presented their early ideas in a short article published by IMD in 1998 entitled "In Search for Original Strategies: How About Some Serious Play?"

Presented with the findings of the work at IMD, LEGO® CEO Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen

1. More: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lego_Serious_Play

sponsored a company under the auspices of LEGO® called Executive Discovery.

Bart Victor led the product development and commercialization process of Serious Play at Executive Discovery. He invited Robert Rasmussen from LEGO® and Professor Dave Owens from Vanderbilt University to help bring the first product to market. The first "LEGO® Serious Play®" application was called Real-Time Strategy.

LEGO® Serious Play® was developed into a consulting method used by companies including Daimler Chrysler, Roche, SABMiller, Tupperware, Nokia and Orange.

At the same time, Johan Roos and Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen established the research effort at the aptly named 'Imagination Lab', a Swiss think tank that between 2001-2006 produced 74 research papers, many journal articles and 4 books.

The result of 15 years development?

A powerful method to solve problems, explore ideas and achieve objectives based on management theory² using a toy.

In 2010 LEGO® made the method open source. This decision created a community of practice and today, unleashed, today we find the method thriving in a wide range of applications.

2. Constructivism (Piaget 1951). Constructionism (Harel & Papert 1991). Complex adaptive system theory (Holland 1995). Autopoietic corporate epistemology (von Krogh & Roos 1994; 1995)

The book aims to help you understand what LEGO® Serious Play® is and how it works.

We hope it helps you journey towards unconscious competence in using LEGO® Serious Play®.

Our purpose in writing.

To help further legitimise a brilliant and powerful method.

Authors



To my family,
thanks for all your
love and support.

For my son Bob
- with love.

 **Sean Blair**

<https://uk.linkedin.com/in/sean-blair>

Sean is the founder of a ProMeet, an international professional facilitation business. He facilitates learning, growth and change in meetings, workshops, conferences, including with LEGO® Serious Play® all over the world.

Sean is one of the LEGO® Serious Play® community's most active practitioners. He set up the first LEGO® Serious Play® MeetUp group in London. There are now over 40 LEGO® Serious Play® MeetUp groups globally.

Described as a systems innovator and 'itinerant provocateur', he imagines a better world. Unwittingly this annoys traditionalists.

Sean is part of the leadership team of EMENA International Association of Facilitators (IAF), an organisation that promotes the power of facilitation. He is an IAF Certified™ Professional Facilitator and a winner of an IAF 'Facilitation Impact Award'.



To Kersti and
Grete Elise, this
book is dedicated.

 **Marko Rillo**

<https://ee.linkedin.com/in/markorillo>

Marko's passion for and early adoption of LEGO® Serious Play® led him to establish the SeriousPlayPro community website that now has over 2000 members.

Marko first heard about LEGO® Serious Play® at a conference with serious play guru Professor Johan Roos in 2005 and began experimenting with the method.

In 2007 he started his doctoral studies at the University of St. Gallen in Switzerland where a former Imagination Lab research fellow professor Claus D. Jacobs became one of his academic mentors.

Marko participated in one of the last LEGO® Serious Play® certification training sessions that was provided directly under the auspices of the LEGO® Corporation. He has facilitated at tiny start-ups and international multinationals, he has also helped create a vision for a country.

The brief story of this book

Sean met Marko virtually through the SeriousPlayPro website when he asked for advice in running his first large LEGO® Serious Play® workshop for 320 people.

We met in person in 2015 at a LEGO® Serious Play® facilitators conference in Billund and discussed the lack of writing about LEGO® Serious Play®.

Both Marko and Sean had been thinking about how to legitimise LEGO® Serious Play® and help it become a more widely accepted and used tool.

Despite there being an excellent Open Source Guide, and a good book on the history, territory and theory of LEGO® Serious Play®, there was no book that explained the LEGO® Serious Play® process.

So we agreed to write **Serious Work**, a how-to book with supporting resources to help people understand the LEGO® Serious Play® basics.

To use LEGO® Serious Play® on important assignments we firmly recommend using a trained facilitator or attending a training programme first!

We imagine readers might use this book as a step before training, or as a guide to try the basics with Build Level 1: Individual Model building in low risk workshops.

We hope this book helps you begin to discover the incredible power of LEGO® Serious Play®.



Acknowledgements

Isaac Newton famously once said, *'If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants'*, we are not claiming to see much further, but we can only produce this book, thanks to those brilliant people who invented and developed this method.

We would like to acknowledge and thank all who created and championed LEGO® Serious Play® for making this book possible.

We especially acknowledge and thank our teachers Robert Rasmussen, Per Kristiansen and Jacqueline Lloyd Smith. They taught us LEGO® Serious Play® and have our deep respect for being the early pioneers of teaching the method.

We have both had the privilege to talk to hundreds of LEGO® Serious Play® facilitators - creative individuals and members of the global Serious Play Pro community. The discussions over the years have provided us with many opportunities to learn. Thank you to everyone who've posted questions, case studies and comments.

LEGO® Foundation

When we had the idea for this book, the first person we contacted was Jette Orduna at the LEGO® Foundation. We are grateful to her and the LEGO® Foundation for giving us permission to write this book.

We also want to say thank you to the following people and organisations for help in the creation of the book:

Thanks to our generous case study clients

The core part of this book is part 5. This is where we use real life examples to help you understand the practical aspects of facilitating LEGO® Serious Play® meetings and workshops.

A book of this kind would not be possible without the generosity of our case study clients in allowing us to share the stories and photos of LEGO® Serious Play®. A big thank you too:



Especially: Karl Anton and the IPTV team from Telia Telco. Peter Brenner, Edward Bignold and the team at IGH. Jim Bowes and the Manifesto Digital team. Rita Fevereiro and the team at FutureLearn.

Customers

We thank all our customers. The biggest learning for any facilitator happens at meetings. We are enormously grateful for the faith you have put in us at every LEGO® Serious Play® meeting and workshop you have allowed us to facilitate.

Photos

During many workshops over the years we took photos during meetings and workshops to record for our clients what happened.

When we took them, we did not imagine writing a book, yet LEGO® is such a visual tool and we are grateful to be able to produce a book with colourful photos of people doing **serious work** with LEGO® at our workshops.

Thanks especially to Julien Carlier, Mieke Barbé, Agnieszka Ziemiańska, David Lardier, Karin Krogh, Thomas Vig, Hans Ravnkjær Larsen, Valérie Guillet, Anette Palm, Janet Skorepa, Deborah Sexton, Richard Tyrrie, Federico Toja, Serge Radovic, Axel Pawlik, Jochem de Ruig, Kaveh Ranjbar, Paul Rendek, Andrew de la Haye, Dr Marianne Guldbrandsen, Milad Ahmed, Richard Ball, Christina Lindeberg, David Dawson, James O'Halloran, Louise Prideaux, Linda Drew, Karen Brown, Elizabeth Rouse, Lawrence Zeegen, Laura Gander-Howe, Anna-Liisa Reinson, Inga Keldo, Kaspar Kalve and Justin Buck.

We are grateful to the LEGO® artist Sean Kenney for allowing us to reproduce a photo of one of his LEGO® Polar Bear sculptures. Thanks also to Michi Yahata from Sean's studio.

Helpers, testers and proof readers

We are fortunate to have help proof reading and testing the ideas in this book. The book is considerably better thanks to Caroline Jessop, Paul Brown, Tammy Seibert, Kersti Peenema and Madis Talmar. Thank you.

Partners who contributed to the book

We are very grateful to have partners who have shared their experience, advice, stories and insight. This book is very much the better with your brilliant contributions. Thanks for believing in us. Let's create the future of LEGO® Serious Play® together!

Production advice and help

Thanks to Dan Start for his excellent publishing advice and Paul Siodmok for helping design a lovely book cover.

Introduction

The objective of this book is to enable you to understand how to facilitate LEGO® Serious Play® based meetings and workshops.

It was written to be a practical 'how to' book, and offer you case studies, step-by-step guides and templates from a range of common build level one applications that you can adapt to your own needs.

It is intended for leaders, managers, facilitators, coaches and business development professionals who are seeking ways to help teams work well together.

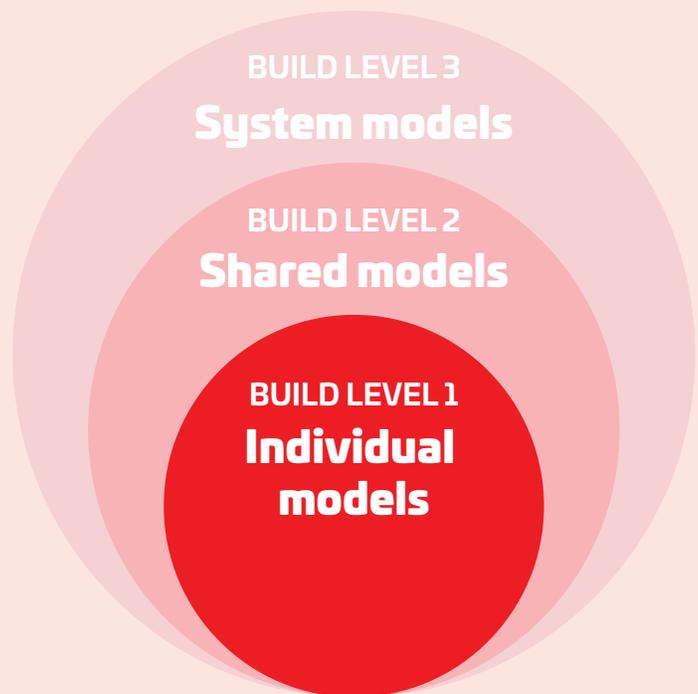
To become an effective and professional facilitator of LEGO® Serious Play®, requires learning by doing, attending a training programme is the only way to master the skills shown in this book.

But our hope is this book gives you enough knowledge to learn about or try basic LEGO® Serious Play® techniques: to facilitate goal setting, ideas workshops, and explore team life through vision, values and behaviours workshops.

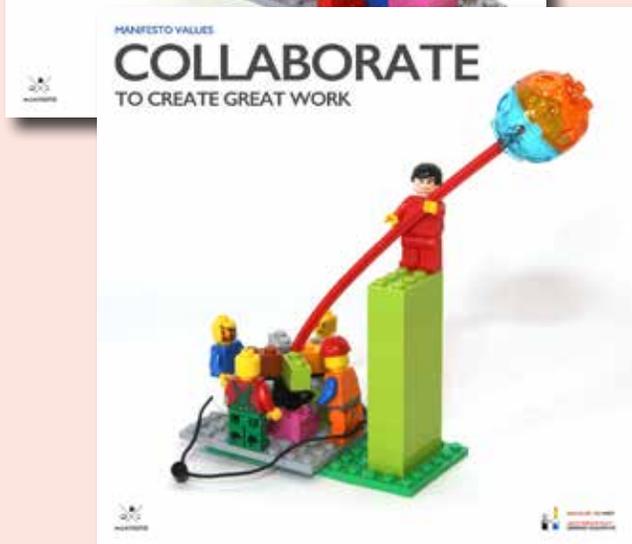
We live in a complex and challenging time where technological, environmental, social and political change demand that we better understand system consequences of our decisions.

In writing this book, we also have a greater purpose: **to help legitimise a brilliant and powerful method.**

LEGO® Serious Play® Three Build Levels



This book's **primary** focus is **Build Level 1: Individual Model Building.**



Models of a 'Simple Guiding Principle' and a value created at a workshop for a London digital agency Manifesto.

Workshop outputs like these created by participants bring ideas to life. See part 5.5 to read about and see the process that resulted in these models.

It therefore seems paradoxical that LEGO® bricks, a product conceived as a children's toy can, enable teams to communicate more powerfully and explore complex organisational issues and unintended consequences especially at build level three.

Legitimise LEGO® Serious Play®

In buying this book and using LEGO® Serious Play® to understand your work challenges you're also helping legitimise a process tool kit you'll wish you'd known about years ago. Thank you for joining our quest.

LEGO® Serious Play® in brief

LEGO® Serious Play® was first created in the mid-1990's by Professors Johan Roos and Bart Victor 'as way to enable managers to describe, create and challenge their views of their business'.

Today, the LEGO® Serious Play® method has been used all over the world by organisations including:

Airbus, Fujitsu, Toyota, Coca-Cola, Fedex, Google, MasterCard, Microsoft, NASA, Nissan, Pfizer, Proctor & Gamble, Target, Telia Telco, Unilever, Waitrose and the World Bank Group; reputable universities including Harvard, MIT, Cambridge, IMD and Oxford; International organizations, including the EU, UNESCO, UNDP; Government ministries and agencies in: Denmark, Estonia, Turkey and United Kingdom, to name a few!

SERIOUS WORK



What is LEGO® Serious Play®?

If you ask different people what LEGO® Serious Play® is you might well get different answers. The reason? Because it's many things in the same package.

LEGO® Serious Play® is a Method

It is a systematic method that enables people to use LEGO® bricks to solve problems, explore ideas and achieve objectives.

LEGO® Serious Play® is a Process

It is a structured process where participants proceed through a series of steps to think, build, tell a story, reflect and refine, to develop a shared understanding on the issue at hand.

LEGO® Serious Play® is a Communication tool or language

LEGO® Serious Play® enables three modes of communication: visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. The models enable enhanced expression, deeper listening and better memory.

Shared model building allow teams to understand each others interpretation and create deeper shared meaning of key ideas.

LEGO® Serious Play® is a Service

It is a service provided by trained facilitators, trainers or coaches who use LEGO® bricks hand in hand with other material tools to help

individuals or teams achieve objectives and create outcomes.

LEGO® Serious Play® is a Framework

As a framework or philosophy LEGO® Serious Play® is a participatory mode of leadership that is democratic, all-inclusive, playful, goal-driven and constructive.

LEGO® Serious Play® is a Product line

It is also patented and trademarked product line of LEGO® corporation. LEGO® and its subsidiary Executive Discovery patented LEGO® Serious Play® in early 2001 as “a program, method and materials for enhancing creative thinking, communication, decision-making and strategic planning.” (U.S. Patent no. 20020103774-A1)

LEGO® Serious Play® is a Meeting tool

While some applications might need a five day LEGO® Serious Play® workshop we also have witnessed its power to activate people in small and large groups, in brief interventions of just 10 minutes to workshop over several days.

LEGO® Serious Play® - a process to enhance innovation and performance.

Based on research³ which shows that this kind of ‘hands-on, minds-on’ learning produces a

3. See: Kristiansen & Rasmussen (2014) Building Better Business using the LEGO® Serious Play® Method.



deeper, more meaningful understanding of the world and its possibilities, the LEGO® Serious Play® methodology deepens the reflection process and enables effective communication, for everyone in your organization.

The process of making something, which is then discussed, leads to more valuable, more insightful and more honest discussions.

The creative process of making something prompts the brain to work in a different way, unlocking new perspectives.

When participants construct an object to represent what they think is important about the issue at hand, before discussion, the downsides of positional power are removed and this allows people to focus on the ideas, not the personalities.

This is not like the typical discussions that occur at work, where a dominant personality identifies the 'key issues' at the start, and then the rest of the conversation follows from there.

In LEGO® Serious Play®, everyone builds, and everyone shares, resulting in more democratic meetings, enabling equal 'air time' from all participants.

Indeed, the process of building and collaborating often produces insights which simply would not have appeared in regular discussions.

When we give shape and form to our imagination, by constructing and externalizing concepts we make our ideas tangible and shareable.

This helps us reflect better on our own ideas, as well as enabling others to reflect with us.

To make an analogy, LEGO® Serious Play® is a bit like making 3D prints of your own thoughts.

The models allow others to see your thoughts and ask questions about them.

LEGO® Serious Play® creates an engaging hands-on environment, where the activity is perceived as meaningful, one's abilities are in balance with the challenge at hand, and one has the tools to express and communicate emerging knowledge.

The organization and scope of the book

As a 'how to' book, we don't cover the history of LEGO® Serious Play® or the theoretical and scientific ideas that underpin LEGO® Serious Play®⁴.

In part 1, the facilitative mindset of the participatory leader:

We introduce the idea of participatory

leadership as an enlightened and effective mode of leadership that today's times require.

Adopt the idea that facilitation is a mindset of a participatory leadership, to enable yourself to lead clever people working on complex challenges.

Because participatory leaders use time working together to get the very best out of participants, this inevitably suggests they have a facilitative mindset.

This is an important idea that supports the LEGO® Serious Play® method which likewise values input from every person, encourages diverse and creative thinking and allows participants to understand ideas systemically.

We hope you'll see that despite its name, LEGO® Serious Play®, is more than just a fad cheered for by a bunch of LEGO® enthusiasts, but a way to be a participatory leader.

Next we cover 'facilitation fundamentals' and signpost you to the core competency framework promoted by the International Association of Facilitators.

In part 2 we cover the vital step in planning any meeting or workshop: objective setting.

Getting clear on the outcomes and objectives for your meeting.

⁴ See 'Building Better Business Using The LEGO® Serious Play® method' by Rasmussen & Kristiansen.

This may sound obvious, but as professional facilitators, this is the stage where we often add real value, and it's the stage that determines much of the process to be used in meetings.

Because objectives trump agendas, we hope you might never use a traditional agenda again, and instead use objectives to drive meetings.

In part 3 we introduce you to the core LEGO® Serious Play® ideas and etiquette that underpin all meetings and workshops.

Then we talk about bricks and offer you ideas about where and how to get them, as well as give you ideas about what kind of volume and what sort you might need, to get the best out of participants in different kinds of workshop.

In part 4 we show you how to give your workshop participants the three basic LEGO® Serious Play® skills.

We describe how to give workshop participants technical building skills, use of metaphors and story telling skills using LEGO® models. Then we'll show you how to help participants share and listen better than in traditional meetings.

These skills will free your meeting participants up from concerns or worries about not having used LEGO® before (or for many years) and enable them to express ideas, concepts, feelings, facts, reflections and insights powerfully using just a few bricks.

Part 5 takes you through five common workshop applications.

In each we offer you a sample workshop plan, taken from a real past project. We give you detailed facilitation instructions about how we prepared, ran and followed up from the workshops.

We offer you these case studies so you can see how these ideas were applied in practice and what outputs and outcomes were created. You can download and adapt our templates for your own use.

In Part 6 our partners share stories, advice and experience from running hundreds of LEGO® Serious Play® workshops.

Then we offer you ideas about how to manage time, mistakes to watch for and how to make LEGO® Serious Movies.

In part 7 we offer you ideas about how to become a virtuoso practitioner and explain why reading a book will make you consciously incompetent.

We set out three ways you can develop your skills and signpost you to a growing community of LEGO® Serious Play® facilitators.

We think the book makes most sense if read in the order outlined, there are some concepts introduced in earlier chapters that are referenced in later chapters.



Part 1

The facilitative mindset of participatory leaders



SERIOUS WORK

The facilitative mindset of participatory leaders

PARTICIPATORY LEADERSHIP - A LEADERSHIP PARADIGM FOR A COMPLEX WORLD

The participatory leadership paradigm is based on **respect** and **engagement**. It **constructively focuses energy** in every human to human encounter.

A more advanced, more democratic and more effective model of leadership, it **harnesses diversity, builds community, and creates shared responsibility for action**.

It deepens individual and collective **learning** yielding **real development and growth**.

Participatory Leadership

This chapter:

Advocates that participatory leadership is a smart way to lead clever people in a complex world

Suggests that a facilitative mindset is the way of a participative leader

Proposes that LEGO® Serious Play® is one way that participatory leaders can facilitate teams to think and work together

Don't participate?!

What is the point of having a meeting where people do not, or are not 'allowed' to, participate?

Many professional people have experienced 'meeting agony', where what people really think is not welcome or where 20% of the people do 80% of the talking.

Have you been there? You know what we're saying?

Lets be honest, if you have ever encountered a meeting where your participation was not welcomed (or facilitated) it wasn't because you didn't have a contribution to make, but because your contribution was just not that important in the mind of the meeting leader.

You could say they weren't a participatory leader.

Participate

A better way. Participatory leadership is a smart way to lead clever people in complex times of unprecedented and accelerating change.

The pace of change has sky-rocketed in the last decade and is set to accelerate further. Change driven by technological innovation, the growth and changing nature of globalisation, environmental pressures and the changing social expectations and attitudes, towards politics, society and culture.

This means that no single leader or manager alone is able to resolve all the issues that their organizations face. They need to engage their teams and involve people and partners, inside and outside their organisations.

In other words, they need to facilitate the participation of teams of bright people in service of meaningful and shared objectives.

However, there is a participation problem that is all too frequent in contemporary leadership culture. Whilst some leaders might say they

Part 2

Outcomes not meetings



SERIOUS WORK

Outcomes not meetings

The objective of this chapter is to outline how to use clear objectives when planning meetings to create useful meeting outcomes.

Begin with the end in mind

Let's be honest. No one wants a meeting or workshop. What people really want is an outcome. This chapter makes the case that the planning stage of workshops is key to having effective meetings.

Objectives. Not agendas

The Oxford dictionary suggests the word 'agenda' has two meanings:

noun. 1. a list of items to be discussed at a formal meeting.

2. the underlying intentions or motives of a particular person or group.

These two meanings are problematic for having effective meetings for two reasons.

1. "**Discuss**" a "list of items" is not a good way to have a productive meeting, and...
2. Unexpressed or **hidden underlying intentions or motives** do not make for a healthy meeting culture.

Verbs. Not verbiage

The verb in the dictionary definition of *agenda* is 'discuss'.

This is a horribly unhelpful verb, because if you invite a group to 'discuss' then that is exactly what they'll do.

This is the problem of agenda driven meetings...

Some will discuss what they think, others will share how they feel... Some might be seeking new information about the agenda item... One might be wanting to make a decision...

Another might be expressing support for the item, others might have questions or reservations, or be pursuing their own 'agenda' to 'put the boot in'.

And before you know it you have lots of people talking at cross purposes.

Nightmare.

A better idea is to convert every agenda item to an objective with a thoughtfully selected verb.

This will help align group focus on all doing the same thing at the same time.

Verbs determine process

Thoughtful selection of a verb also helps determine the process at any given part of the meeting.

'Decide verb?' - That needs a decision process.

'Create verb?' - That needs a creative process.

'Plan verb?' - That needs a planning process, and so on.

TRY THIS: With a forthcoming meeting, try and convert every agenda item into an objective. This preparation step will force you to think about what you want to have happen with each agenda item. See an example, page 49.

Clear objectives are the reason for meeting

Ideally, specific meeting objectives should connect obviously to the organisations purpose and strategic objectives.

Well thought through objectives are more than half the work of planning an effective meeting. A clear objective implies the process design that follows.

Good objectives are stretching but achievable. When people are clear what is trying to be achieved, meetings work better.

The ProMeet method card on the next page describes how to write good objectives.

The ProMeet Objectives Logic

Create clear and productive meetings by to establishing a clear objectives logic or hierarchy.

01: Objectives at the level of purpose
Organisations mission, vision or purpose

02: Objectives at the level of strategy
Organisations strategic objectives

02: Objectives at the level of the meeting
Clear, specific objectives the meeting is to achieve

Overcome meeting agony

Having asked thousands of people what is their version of 'meeting agony and ecstasy' we know that for many agony is when the purpose of a meeting is not clear.

Overcome this agony by using objectives, and banish agendas, in either sense of the word.

Accordingly, and like the example on page 49, for any kind of meeting or workshop (regardless of the methodology - LEGO® or no LEGO®) it is usually a wise idea to develop a clear objectives logic.

Five great questions to ask when you're planning a meeting:

Q1. By the end of the meeting, what is the best outcome you'd hope for?

Q2. What are the business objectives this meeting must serve?

Q3. Imagine the meeting has been wildly successful, what will have changed for the better?

Q4. Suppose we look at the meeting as a step in a larger initiative, what's the ultimate goal?

Q5. Is there anything else you'd like the meeting to achieve?

What each of these questions is seeking clarify or establish:

Q1. Above all, what **outcome** should this meeting or workshop create?

Q2. Context. Establish the **business or strategic objectives** the meeting must serve.

Q3. Understand what **change objectives** this meeting needs to serve.

Q4. Understand the **purpose** the meeting or workshop is in service of.

Q5. Understand if there are any other opportunities for the meeting to **provide value**.

See how these ideas were used in preparation for a half day workshop for Manifesto Digital, the case study shown in part 5.5 on pages 182 >>>

Part 3

Beginning with LEGO® Serious Play®



SERIOUS WORK

Beginning with LEGO® Serious Play®

The objectives of this chapter are:

To introduce you to the core ideas that underpin LEGO® Serious Play®

To provide information about what kind of bricks are best, where to get them and how to store them

A brief overview of Lego® Serious Play

In 2010 the LEGO Group made LEGO® Serious Play® Open Source and in doing so kindly gifted the world a brilliant process. Thanks LEGO®!

The idea LEGO® had was to make freely available the basic principles and philosophy and support people wanting to use the process.

LEGO® produced an excellent open source guide which gives an overview of the process and how to use it.

The creative common licence kindly allows everyone to share and adapt the ideas and processes, provided credit is given, a link to the licence is shared and changes are indicated.

For transparency, some sections of the guide appear below with edits to take into account our experiences.

What LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® is, and what LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® is not

According to the Open Source Guide:

The LEGO® Serious Play® methodology offers a sophisticated means for a group to share ideas, assumptions and understandings; to engage in rich dialogue to work out meaningful solutions to real problems.

A LEGO® Serious Play® workshop typically takes a day or at its shortest, a workshop takes three or four hours. Unsurprisingly – as time is tight in business, and everywhere else – efforts have been made to reduce the length of time that LEGO® Serious Play® takes.

If a facilitator was to leave out the skills-building exercises and leap straight into a complex task and encourage participants to race through it quickly, this would simply not be effective.

Users of LEGO® Serious Play® methods have to recognize that the strengths of the process lie in its cycles of building, reflection, and collaborative learning. It is a particular kind of facilitated process, used for particular purposes. Therefore, LEGO® Serious Play® is not a fun ice-breaker exercise to start off a meeting.

LEGO® Serious Play® is not a tool for building organizational diagrams or for planning physical

environments (such as buildings or work spaces). You can use LEGO® bricks for these purposes, but it is not LEGO® Serious Play®.

The Core of LEGO® Serious Play®

LEGO® Serious Play® is a method that enables constructive reflection and dialogue.

During a structured process, participants use LEGO® bricks to create models that express their thoughts, reflections and ideas.

The 2010 Open Source Guide, expressed a hope that the growing community of LEGO® Serious Play® facilitators would develop new applications for LEGO® Serious Play®.

The community has realised this aspiration. There are a hundred case studies of LEGO® Serious Play® on the seriousplaypro.com website, of it in use in a very wide range of applications, from anti-bullying and bible study, to business model canvas, service design and change management.

Process Steps

At the heart of LEGO® Serious Play® is a simple, but powerful process that facilitators use. Slightly confusingly the Open Source Guide offers a both a three step and four step process that underpins the LEGO® Serious Play® method.

These could be best summarised as:

1. Set the Challenge > 2. Build > 3. Share

1. Context > 2. Build > 3. Reflect > 4. Integrate

Rasmussen & Kristiansen (2014) suggest a 4-step "Core LEGO® Serious Play® process"

1. Posing the question > 2. Construction > 3. Sharing > 4. Reflection

Our experience had led us to conclude LEGO® Serious Play® meeting and workshops are most effective by following a six step process. Or you might think of it as a two + four process.

Two vital steps in the preparation phase, and then during a workshop (often many cycles of) a four step process with participants. A brief description of what happens in each step:

Phase 1: Establish objectives

Considering the purpose of the workshop in advance, and developing a clear set of meeting or workshop objectives, as outlined in part 2 of this book is a prerequisite for any successful meeting or workshop.

Phase 2: Develop questions

Considering the purpose of the workshop in advance, the facilitator then formulates each building challenge in a way that will help release insight, open reflection and dialogue, and achieve the objectives.

Facilitators LEGO® Serious Play® Process

Preparation stage

Workshop stage



Workshop process design should always be in service of a clear and relevant set of objectives.

Developing the right build questions is key. Even subtle changes in nuance can have a big impact.

The facilitator sets a build question or challenge.

Participants build LEGO® models representing their reflections on the building challenge.

Participants share the story of their own models, and collectively the group explore the model and its meaning.

Groups reflect on what they have created, and seek deeper layers of insight.



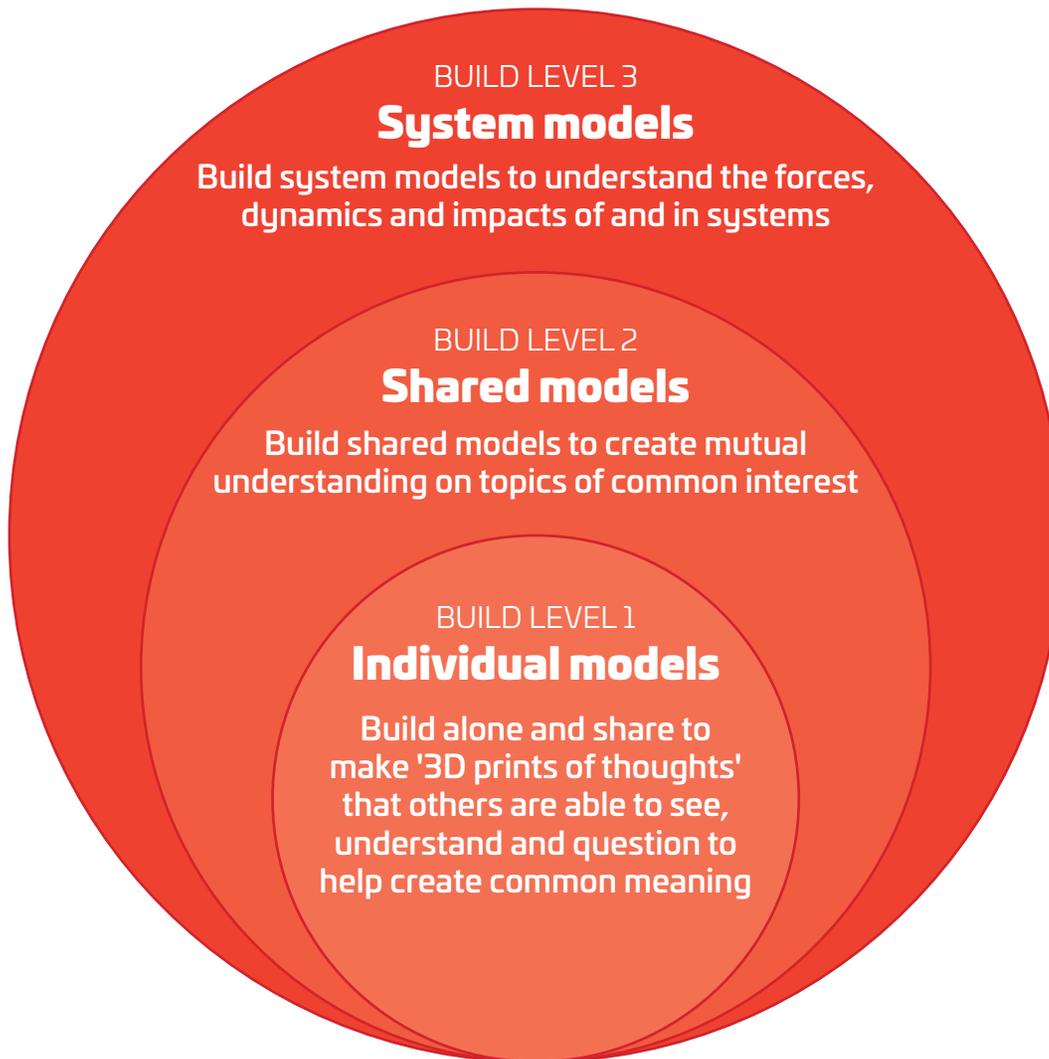
This Process model has been created by the authors as developments of those made available by the LEGO® Group under a Creative Commons licence ('Attribution Share Alike': see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/> for licence details). Feel free to share and use under the same licence. Enjoy!

LEGO® Serious Play® - Build Levels

There are three levels of build in LEGO® Serious Play®

Level 1 : Individual models is the foundation level. Shared models and system models are built from individual models.

This book primarily focusses on the facilitation of level one.



L3: Interact with dynamic systems. Understand how factors influence each other. Explore risks, opportunities and unintended consequences of different scenarios and strategies on shared visions.

L2: Explore how others see the same ideas differently. Then create shared understanding and common meaning.

L1: Learn enhanced communication. Use auditory, visual and kinaesthetic modes to express your thoughts and feelings and understand others ideas, thoughts and feelings.

Build Level 3 is not 'better' than Build level 1. Level 1 is the foundation level and has huge power alone and combined with Build Levels 2 and 3.

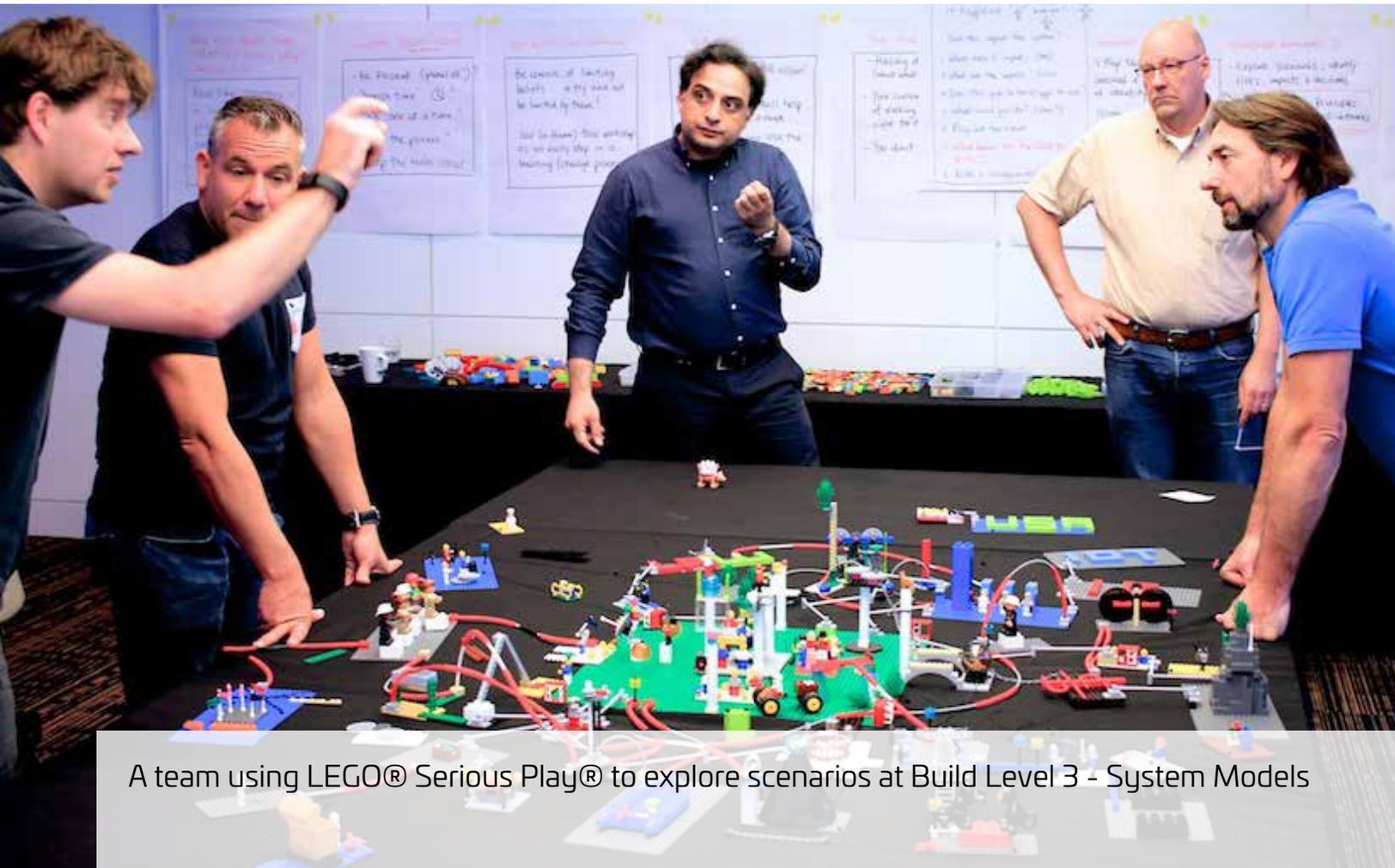
Applications

LEGO® Serious Play® is just a tool. We think of it a bit like another meeting tool, a flipchart and marker. Seen in this way the applications for LEGO® Serious Play® are as wide (wider actually!) as the humble pen and paper.

In organisational life there are common applications, some of which we cover in this book.

Use LEGO® Serious Play® Level Build Level 1 in any meeting where you want everyone's input, where diverse thinking is welcome and where it is good to reflect before talking

Level 1, individual model building is THE foundation build level, even complex system models like the one shown below, start from being built as level one models



A team using LEGO® Serious Play® to explore scenarios at Build Level 3 - System Models

Part 4

**LEGO® Serious Play®
skills build...**

... & four fundamentals

The absolutely, fundamentally vital things LEGO® Serious Play® facilitators do.

LEGO® Serious Play® skills build

The objectives of this chapter are:

To enable you to facilitate a LEGO® Serious Play® skills build

To understand how the LEGO® Serious Play® Facilitation Fundamentals achieve enhanced communication

Why a skills build?

The LEGO® Serious Play® skills build is a foundation component of the LEGO® Serious Play® method. Don't even consider skipping it. Not ever.

The skills build gives participants technical skills, metaphor skills, story telling skills and enables them to use the bricks as adults engaged in LEGO® Serious Play® as opposed to children involved in play.

The skills build is also the time to normalise how participants should use the bricks with the enhanced communication that LEGO® Serious Play® makes possible.

Some people come to a LEGO® Serious Play® workshop feeling unsure or sceptical about being confronted with what looks like a kids toy set. This can make them think negatively and feel uncomfortable. Done well, the skills build will help even hardcore sceptics experience the power of LEGO® Serious Play® and dissolve the reticence that is visible if you have a room full of people leaning back on their chairs, arms crossed, looking bemused.

Learning from experience: Sean's story

I was facilitating a workshop to help develop a youth engagement strategy for a UK charity.

At the outset I saw crossed arms and one or two people looked uncomfortable.

After we completed the skills build I asked the group if they had any reflections.

One participant, who had not initially looked at ease, with a smile and a twinkle in her eye, said, "*You know what? This isn't as naff as I thought it would be.*" ('naff'. British slang, describing something that is stupid, lame or unpalatable).

I loved that she said that and thanked her for it. She gave voice to what a few of participants had thought. Her experience of being really listened too in the skill build legitimise the process in her mind. She was 100% onboard with the process.



SERIOUS WORK

Skills build 1: The Tower

Two components

The skills build as has two components.

1. Giving participants technical skills, metaphor skills and story telling skills.
2. Normalising the enhanced communication that LEGO® Serious Play® makes possible.

In this chapter, we'll give you a typical workshop plan / set of facilitation notes that you can download and adapt for your own workshop.

How long is a skills build?

For small groups of about 8 participants allow between 40-60 minutes to deliver a skills build.

Some facilitators advocate up to 90 minutes for a skills build, but for short workshops that are three to four hours in duration its hard to give about half the workshop time to the skills build when participants are rightly keen to explore their issues. Done well a skills build can enable even large groups to successfully use LEGO® Serious Play® in 30-40 minutes.

In Part 3 - **Beginning with LEGO® Serious Play®**, we outlined the LEGO® Serious Play® process steps (page 67) that includes a 'shared meaning' stage. In this stage, participants tell the stories of their models, and clearly it will take a group of 10 people about twice as long to do this as a group of 5 people.

The skills build typically has three exercises, and so the majority of the time is used as participants tell the stories of their models. What you ask participants to build and how tightly you control the 'share time' will determine much of the total duration of a skills build.

Group size

In your early days of practicing LEGO® Serious Play® aim for a smaller group size. The general rule is one facilitator to a group of maximum 12 participants.

There are advanced techniques to facilitate large groups but begin by learning to facilitate small groups of about six people.

What bricks should I use?

The ideal set of bricks for the skills build are the Windows Exploration kits, (art.2000409). The small bags are not too expensive individually, and they contain a super mix of 48 bricks. The only downside is you have to buy them in boxes of 100 bags.



Using Bricks as Metaphors

Helps participants tell rich stories with simple builds



How artist Sean Kenney represented Polar bears in LEGO® (serious LEGO® skills!)

©Sean Kenny 2016



How a child might represent a LEGO® Polar bear



How a Polar bear could look or be represented in a LEGO® Serious Play® workshop

Fundamental 1: You'll enable three modes of enhanced communication

People find communication is more effective with LEGO® Serious Play® because it facilitates auditory, visual and kinaesthetic communication.

These three modes allow a speaker to communicate more fully by 1) explaining the idea with words, 2) explaining what each brick in the model means and 3) moving and articulating the model, describing it from different perspectives.

In LEGO® Serious Play® workshops you lose visual and kinaesthetic communication the moment a participant moves their attention away from the bricks and starts to relate a thought-based story. Then the listeners visibly begin to zone out.

Your job as a LEGO® Serious Play® facilitator is to help people quickly learn how to use the bricks as an enhanced form of communication and help them constantly focus their attention on bricks.



Part 5

Workshop applications and case studies

5.1 Goal setting workshop

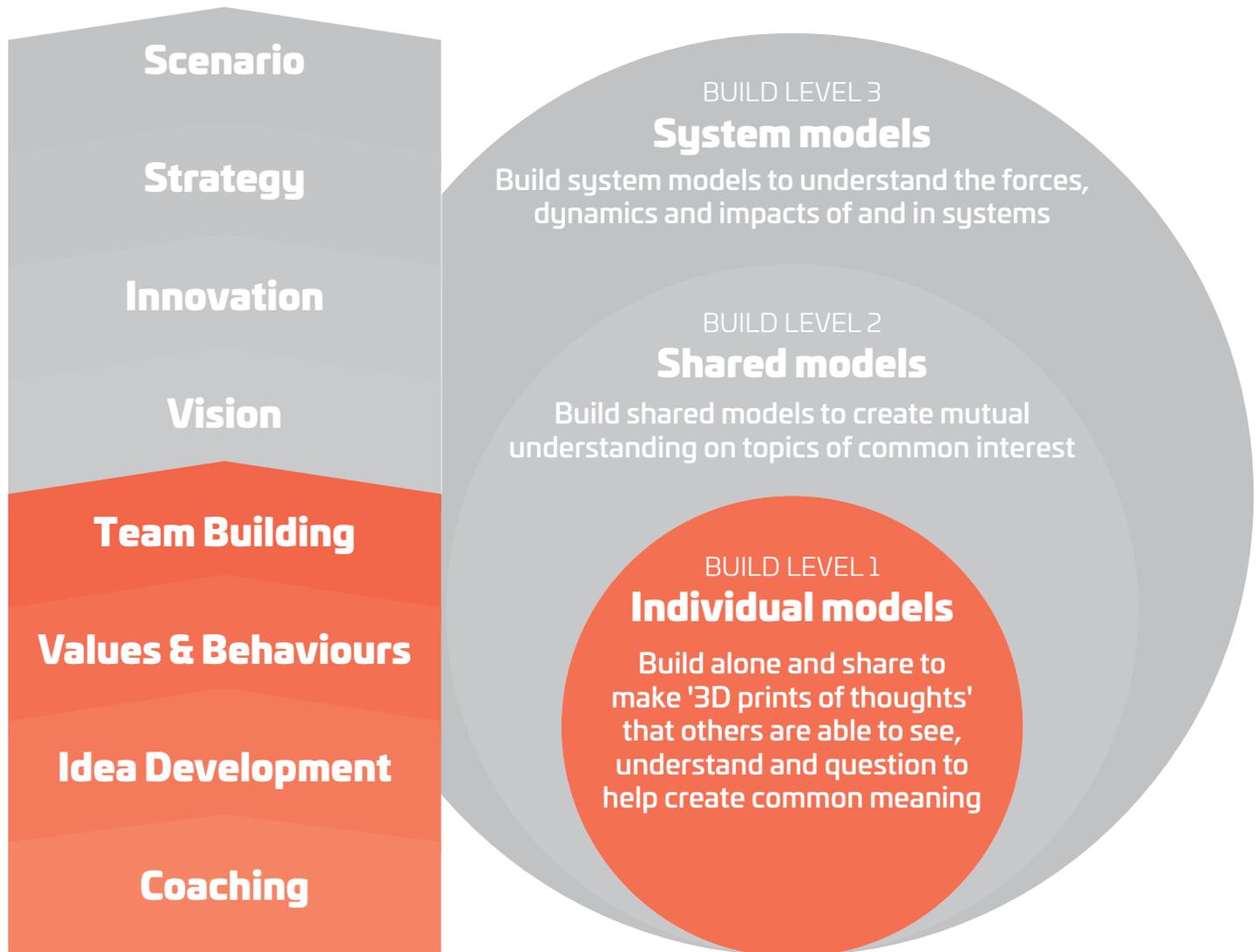
5.2 Team build - FutureLearn

5.3 Ideas workshop - Telia Telco

5.4 Values & behaviours - Manifesto

5.5 Shared vision - IHG

The case studies focus on build level 1 applications



Part 5.1

A goal setting workshop

Part 5.2



A Team Build Workshop

Team Build

12 people, 4 hours

Thanks to Rita Fevereiro and the team at FutureLearn for allowing us to share this case study.

Background

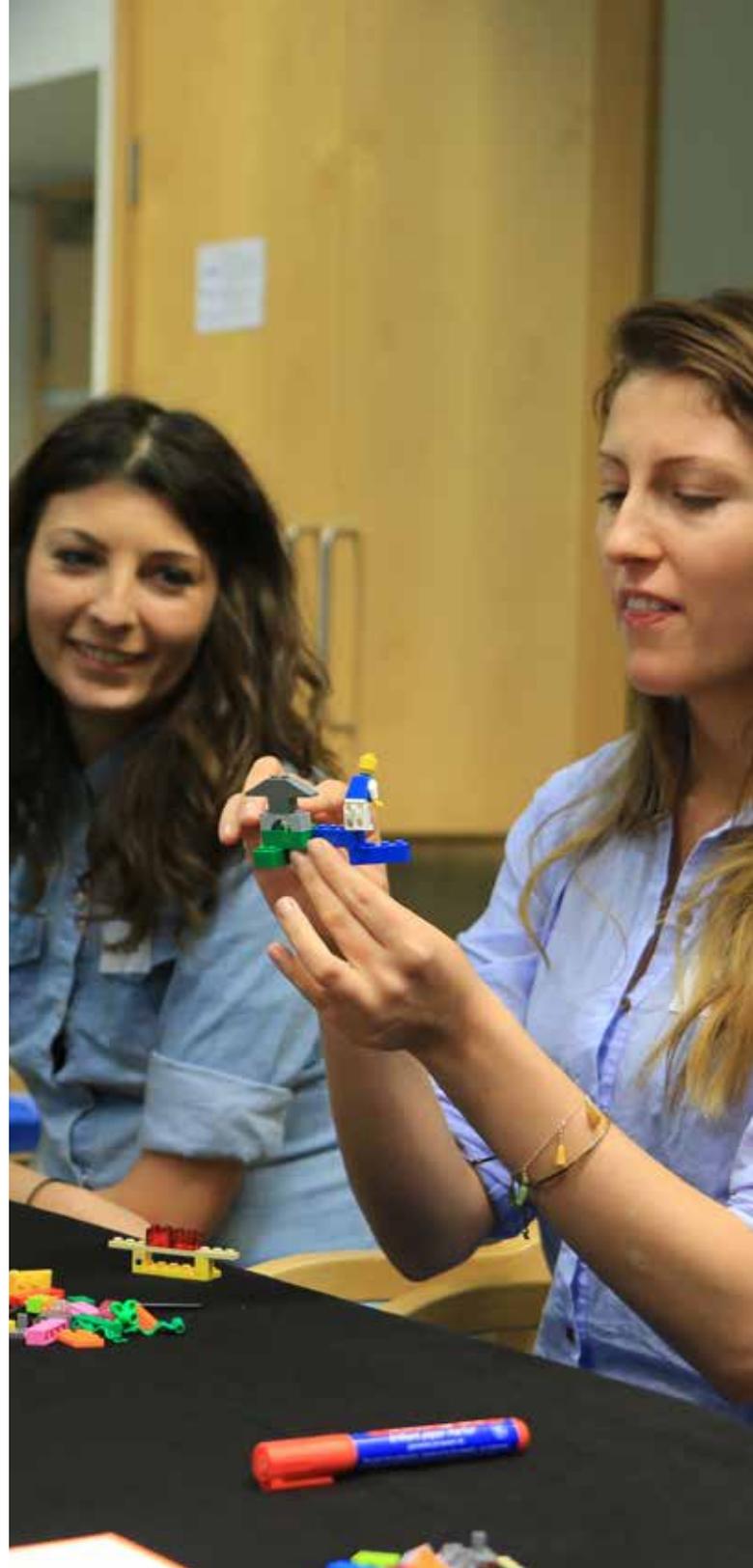
A difficult thing in teams is communication; saying what you think - sharing your reality, the way you see the world and being open to hearing what others see, perceive or believe.

What is an effective team?

An effective team:

- Is bound by shared and meaningful purpose
- Is focused on shared goals
- Operates with shared values
- Communicates fluently
- Has trust in each other
- Learns to improve constantly (feedback)

Team building is an ongoing process that helps groups evolve into a cohesive unit. When team members share expectations for accomplishing group tasks, trust and support one another and respect one another's individual differences, a healthy team culture grows.



Overarching Objective

To create a stronger team with a clear picture of our team vision and understanding on positive and negative behaviours needed to realise our team vision.

Time	Session	Objective	Process/Notes
40 mins	Skills build	<p>To give participants LEGO® Serious Play® skills</p> <p>(Technical, metaphor and story telling)</p>	<p>1. Technical - Build a Tower 2 mins + 10 mins share Music - Snap out of it</p> <p>2. Metaphors - Explain this! 30 seconds + 10 mins share</p> <p>3. Story telling - Build a model of your Dream Holiday 2 mins + 10 mins share</p> <p>Music - Happy</p> <p>Windows Kits. Then bag up</p> <p>Boards: Etiquette, Core Process</p>
10 mins	Effective teams	<p>To clarify the workshop objectives</p>	<p>HANDOUT: Gridcard</p> <p>What are two key qualities of effective teams? (bullets a couple of words not paragraph)</p> <p>What key thing is needed to build an effective team?</p> <p>Reflection on Teams: Are those the qualities and things needed to build effective teams?</p>

Facilitation notes *narrative*

A classic LEGO® Serious Play® skills build, see part 4 for a detailed plan about how to facilitate this component.

Allow more time than this in your first workshops.

During each round of sharing, bring participants attention back to the core ideas in the models they build.

Use prompts like:

‘Tell the story of the model’. ‘Touch and point’. ‘Listen with eyes’. ‘Be curious about what each others models mean’.

Acknowledge participants who do these things well to try to develop these group habits. Watch for people who build models and don't use them to tell the story, and politely help them focus.

It can be helpful to use the A3 boards to remind participants of the etiquette and the facilitation fundamentals.



Participants during the skills build. Each was given a Windows Exploration Kit to use, but you could use any selection of bricks.

+ See ‘The bricks, how to get them’ in Part 3.

Workshop outputs

Identity and feedback models, a shared team vision and positive and negative behaviour models.



Workshop Learning

What I've learned about the power of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® as an effective communication tool. By Rita Fevereiro

This has been reproduced from the article the workshop client, Rita wrote on LinkedIn Pulse. Read the full article: <http://bit.ly/Rita-Lego>

#1 Everyone builds and everyone shares

For every challenge or question, everyone needs to build a model using LEGO® bricks. Sometimes there will be specific instructions, others it's pretty much up to the person building the model. But the most important is that everyone builds something and shares what they've created.

#2 There are no wrong answers

No matter what you build, there is no right or wrong answer. It's your creation, your ideas, and your view and all valuable and relevant.

#3 Sharing is mandatory but only to a certain point

Everyone needs to explain the models they've built but they can reserve the right to only explain it to a certain extent. Especially if they've built something personal they don't feel comfortable explaining in detail. I'm not sure if we're the odd team but everyone seemed

pretty open and willing to share more about themselves which was both inspiring and fun.

#4 Creativity is enhanced by the use of metaphors

I was astonished by the creativity of the team's individual models. Not so much due to any one's special expertise in building but because everyone was really engaged and used their imagination to explain concepts and thoughts that bricks alone wouldn't be able to reflect.

#5 The power of listening and speaking with your eyes and hands

We were always encouraged to explain each model with our hands and pointing at the different elements as we told its story.

This helped with bringing the story to life but also made it much more powerful as others also listened attentively and followed the model of the person sharing the story with their eyes as much as with their ears.

#6 The importance of building individually and together

I've enjoyed building my own models and see how far my creativity could go, as much as I've enjoyed listening to everyone else's stories. I've learnt more about the personal and professional selves of each member of the team and that, in itself, was a good outcome. But building a shared model, a common vision that we all can look forward to was by far the most enjoyable experience. It felt good as the team

Part 5.3



An Ideas Workshop

Part 5.4



A Shared Vision Workshop

Part 5.5



Values & behaviours

Part 6

Practical tips

The objective of this chapter is to offer you practical tips to help you understand how brilliant LEGO® Serious Play® workshops are run.

Learn from respected peers

We invited respected LEGO® Serious Play® Facilitators from around the world to share their stories to emphasize the ideas in this book.



Camilla Nørgaard Jensen
USA/Denmark



Dieter Reuther
USA



Kristina Nyzell
Sweden



Mercedes Hoss
Germany



Kim Pong Lim
Singapore



Patrizia Bertini
Italy



Eli de Friend
Switzerland



Maria Stashenko
Russia



Oliver Knapman
China



Camilla Nørgaard Jensen

 @CamillaJensen

Specialties:

Wicked Problems
Science Communication
Design thinking

Scholar of Serious Play

I use LEGO® Serious Play® to facilitate cross-disciplinary communication on wicked problems. For my PhD research I applied LEGO® Serious Play® to deliver a nano-ethics curriculum at Arizona State University

During class, my students used LEGO® Serious Play® to share their knowledge and values related to the implications and applications of nanomaterials. In addition to increased topic understanding, students reported that using LEGO® Serious Play® incited creativity and improved communication, due to the playful nature and because "you physically put your ideas on the table."

Even when struggling to combine their perspectives into a shared model, teams described these challenges as "fun frustration" that led them to be creative and think of stories that effectively conveyed their multifaceted considerations. Additionally, they felt they knew their fellow students in this class better than peers they had spent a full semester with in other classes.

My key takeaways from the experience

Participants must build skills to become fluent in self-expression through models and metaphors, especially on complex topics. I dedicated the first of the four workshops to skill building.

Large groups must be subdivided into smaller tables. I divided my twenty students into four teams of five participants each. For research purposes, ethnographic observers were assigned to each table, but they also served as my extension, clarifying prompts and signalling to me when their team was ready to move on.

LEGO® is designed to make noise when it's shuffled. It's part of the appeal, but in a large room it can interfere with discussion. Seek out a venue with good acoustics and use tablecloths to dampen noise whenever facilitating more than one table at a time.

When you end your workshop with a debrief exercise participants take mental inventory of the experience. One way to prompt reflection is to ask them to write out what "squared" with them (#square), three things that stood out to them (#triangle), and something that is still "circling" for them (#circle).

I use Twitter for this. It enables a public exchange of reflections to everybody's benefit, if something is unclear to one person it is probably unclear to others too. In consecutive workshops, the written reflections provide continuity, e.g. at the beginning of the next workshop I will clarify what they reported had been circling for them.



UNIVERSITY CLASSROOMS
Please help keep your classroom clean

Photo: Emma Seager



Patrizia Bertini

 @legoviews

Specialties:

Innovation
Creativity & Co-creation
Systems Thinking

Inside the minds of others

Can you imagine how many stories are packed into the models participants build? Have you ever had the temptation to delve more and get more stories from the models?

I did and I wanted to explore the universe of meaning and stories hidden in those models, and learn more about how people see the world. So I asked myself what if I used the LEGO® Serious Play® approach for one to one interviews?

The first question I had to answer was: which bricks can I use? The Window Exploration kit looked a good starting point: small enough, yet with sufficient metaphorical elements to boost storytelling. Then I found volunteers during the Occupy London movement.

As a former journalist, I had always felt the question and answer game was inadequate to really see the world with people's eye: journalists with their questions often functions as a filter.

Would LEGO® Serious Play® change this? It did, in fact my first interviews were a revelation.

I asked participants to build the world as they saw it, keeping the questions open, unbiased, and broad to allow their point of view to emerge spontaneously.

I acted as a Socratic midwife, asking questions about their models, playing with them, moving and taking bricks away, challenging the points of view in a playful and non threatening way. It was not me leading the interview, but the bricks. I was careful in crafting the questions, avoiding leading clues, and tried to make sure participants were not biased by my point of view or expectations.

And participants shared their inner worlds and thoughts, feeling using the bricks. The bricks acted as a powerful medium and allow people's universe to become stories and narratives.

Ever since, I have applied this maieutic approach in countless cases: I've tested it in political contexts like Palestine and Israel, I used to explore complex concepts like colour, I've talked to artist, activists, and business men.

The result is always the same: I can see the world with people's eye, through their stories and words, and my role is just to guide them, through their models, to open up their universe to me in a journey we build together.

Read the occupy interviewees transcripts at:
legoviews.com/category/occupy/



Part 7

Becoming a virtuoso practitioner

OR WHY THE OTHER SUBTITLE IS: *HOW TO BE A CONSCIOUSLY INCOMPETENT LEGO SERIOUS FACILITATOR*



Imagine you want to abseil. You could read a how-book about that.

But reading wouldn't make you able to abseil safely or competently.

To really know abseiling you'd need a helping hand from a wise teacher, who knows her knots, to guide you in real world practice.

Some 'hands-on' skills are best acquired by taught 'hands-on' doing.

Part 7: Becoming a virtuoso practitioner

The objective of this chapter is to outline three paths to become a skilled facilitator

Some skills can only be mastered through doing. So called 'experiential knowledge' is the only way to learn how to competently perform some hands-on things in practice.

How-to books like this one offer 'propositional knowledge'.

You could read as many books as you like about **how to drive a car, perform CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, 'the kiss of life') or abseil** but this alone would not make you able to do these things safely or competently without real world practice and help from a wise teacher.

'Propositional knowledge', the kind of you get from reading a book can, at best, make aware practitioners consciously incompetent.

This book has the sub sub title, "**with conscious incompetence**" because to become a competent LEGO® Serious Play®, or even a virtuoso facilitator, you'll need to learn by doing.

We'd suggest that readers who have not experienced LEGO® Serious Play® might have been at stage 1 of the competence matrix as they began reading this book.

Most people who have read the whole book *attentively might now* be at stage 2 (some readers, already skilled in facilitating hands on processes might feel they are now at stage 3).

User testing of early drafts of this book suggested that reading alone was not enough to skilfully facilitate (get to stage 3) and there maybe some, including our teachers, who might think it's folly to produce a 'how-to' book to try and teach such a hands-on process.

But we had two objectives in writing this book: to enable you to **understand** how to facilitate LEGO® Serious Play® based meetings and workshops, with a deeper purpose **to help legitimise a brilliant and powerful method.**

Explaining how things work makes some people interested to learn more. And that's what we hope this book has done. We hope it has helped you understand enough that you'd be interested to want to learn more.

And we hope that by explaining the LEGO® Serious Play® process it has gone some way to legitimising what we know to be a brilliant and powerful method.

Stage 1

UNCONSCIOUS INCOMPETENCE

You're unaware of the
skill and your lack of
proficiency

Stage 2

CONSCIOUS INCOMPETENCE

You're aware of the
skill and your lack of
proficiency

Stage 4

UNCONSCIOUS COMPETENCE

Performing the
skill becomes automatic

Stage 3

CONSCIOUS COMPETENCE

You can use the
skill but only with effort

With luck we might have made some progress towards achieving the two objectives in your mind.

Three practice paths

There are three obvious routes to developing your LEGO® Serious Play® skills.

1. Practice the ideas alone.
2. Experience the process with a trained facilitator.
3. Participate in a training programme.

You might find a combination of these paths the best way to develop your skills.

1. Practice the ideas alone

This book has been written with the intention of enabling you facilitate and develop your Build Level 1: Individual Model Building skills alone.

We encourage you to find, or create a **low risk** and friendly environment to:

- practice a goal setting meeting.
- try a skills build workshop.
- before then setting up a safe space to explore a topic that is important to your group or organisation.

You might buy some bricks and try some of the simpler exercises and see how you get on.

Learn from your practice

With any test session, including one to ones make sure you evaluate your performance.

Be wise

You would indeed be wise to include a learning review of some kind after each of your practice sessions.

This will be a chance for you to workout what went well, but more importantly get some feedback on what could have gone better.

Make it OK for people to be honest in their feedback. In groups spoken feedback tends to norm to what others have already said, this limits the useful feedback, so you might consider putting the questions opposite on a feedback sheet to get BRIEF written answers.

2. Experience the process with a trained facilitator

A great way to get experiential learning is by being a participant in a workshop run by a trained LEGO® Serious Play® facilitator.

You can both experience some of the ideas in this book (no doubt with slightly different twists and emphasises) and observe a facilitator in action.

If you live in a country or city where LEGO® Serious Play® MeetUps happen its a great way to learn more.

Questions you might ask after your first meetings or workshops might include:

On a scale 1 to 5 (5 being high) how would you rate the workshop?

What needed to happen to be a 5?

What, if anything was unclear or confusing?

If we did the workshop/session again, what small thing would you change to make it (even) better?

What could I have done better?

How effective was the session in achieving the objectives?

Where (if anywhere) did I look like I was struggling (in my facilitation)?

What was the strength you experienced using LEGO® Serious Play®?

What was the weakness you experienced using LEGO® Serious Play®?

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?

Sometimes you'll get better feedback if it's written, but don't leave it until later... if you plan to get feedback allow 5 minutes at the end of the allotted time.

LEGO® Serious Play® MeetUps



*'Meetup is an online social networking portal that facilitates offline group meetings in various localities around the world. Meetup allows members to find and join groups unified by a common interest.'*¹

We founded the LEGO® Serious Play® MeetUps in London in 2014, and encouraged our peers to set up LEGO® Serious Play® MeetUps in other cities and countries.

There are now over 40 all over the world.

www.meetup.com

Be aware that there is no quality control, we know of some LEGO® Serious Play® MeetUp's that are run by people who have not undertaken LEGO® Serious Play® training courses. LEGO® MeetUps are not to be sales pitches, so best to read reviews of MeetUp's before signing up.

1. From Wikipedia



...
+
k

A happy Justin during a SeriousWork Level 1: Individual Model Building training workshop

Playcamps and conferences

Another way to experience LEGO® Serious Play® is at conferences. The Agile community has picked up on LEGO® Serious Play® so you might find opportunities to attend a session www.playcamp.net.

If you are organising the kind of conference where people exchange practice, you could consider inviting a LEGO® Serious Play® facilitator to run a session. If you live the same city as the contributors of this book, consider asking one of us to come and run a workshop.

3. LEGO® Serious Play® Training

Training programmes are a recommend route to learning more, especially for professionals who spend their lives helping people work together.

If you are considering taking a LEGO® Serious Play® facilitator training course, ask: **What kind of meetings, workshops, projects or applications do I plan to lead or facilitate?**

Assess what you plan to facilitate

A good way to assess the kind of training you need is to consider the applications or kinds of meeting or workshop you'll lead or facilitate. There is a table on the pages that follow that might help you assess the kinds of skills you might need for different applications.

Learn the skills you need

Facilitation of Build Level 1: Individual Models enables you to enhance communication on any issue, unlock learning, set goals, offer feedback, mentor or coach. You can facilitate many kinds of meeting with just this Build Level.

However, if you need to help teams create common understanding on shared concerns like team vision, you'll need to understand how to facilitate Build Level 2: Shared Model Building.

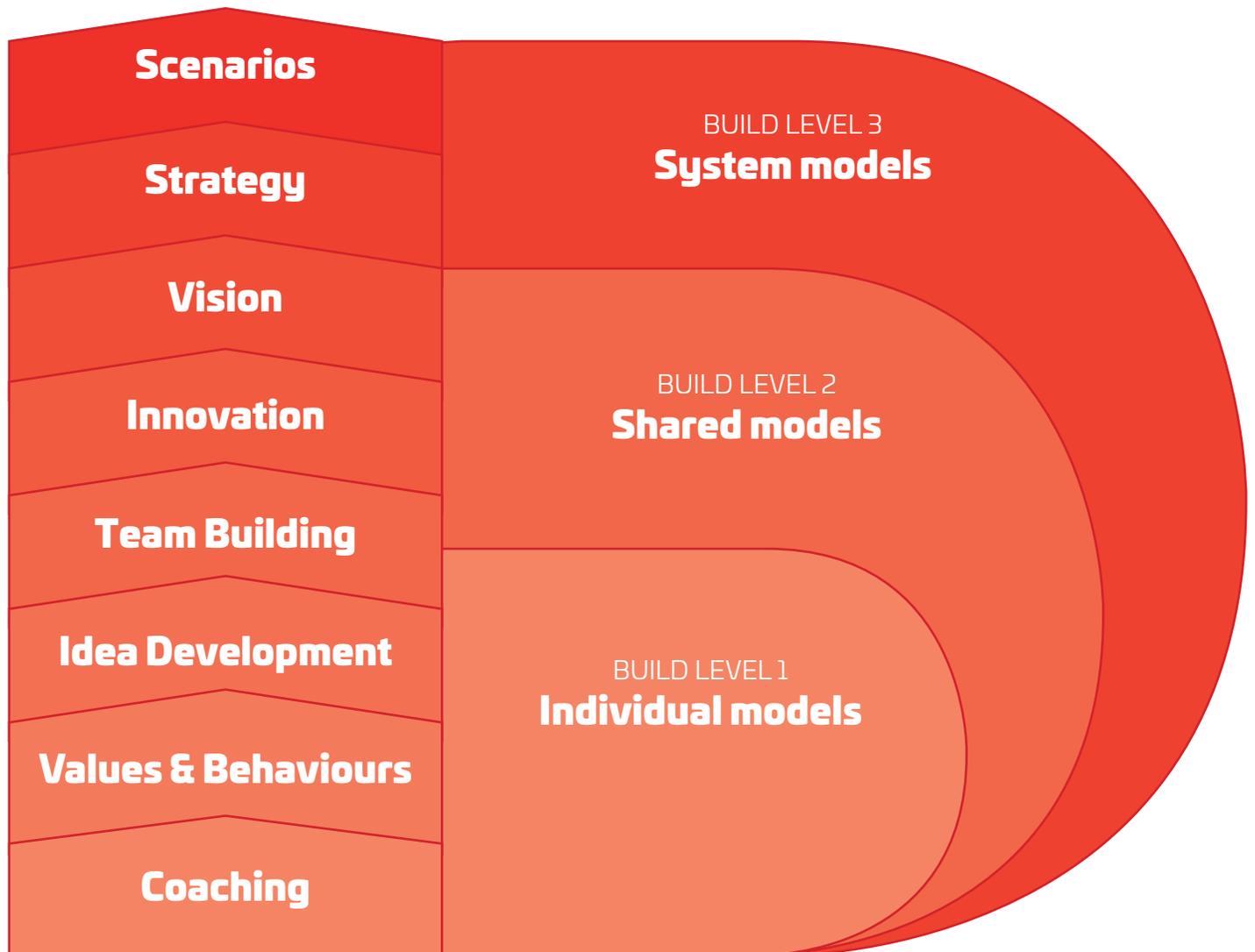
Remember this book has focussed on Build Level 1 facilitation techniques. This is the foundation of all LEGO® Serious Play® meetings and workshops, and you can do a lot with level one.

On the market there are longer and shorter training offers from which you can choose the most appropriate.

We advise it's worth being clear about what you think you might want to facilitate before deciding on what kind of training course might serve your needs.

Once you are clear about what type of meeting you want to facilitate, head to www.serious.global/learn to find information on training options.

Considering training? Ask, what do I want to facilitate?



... then what level of LEGO® Serious Play® skills do I need?

The kinds of skills you'll need for different jobs or responsibilities.

LEGO® Serious Play® **Advanced Skills**

Build Level 3: System Modelling

Create and use scenarios to explore dynamic systems and 'real time strategy'. Understand change and develop simple guiding principles. Model, analyse and redesign processes and systems. Understand how external and internal factors influence goals.

LEGO® Serious Play® **Intermediate Skills**

Build Level 2: Shared Model Building

Create common understanding on shared concerns. Develop shared vision and goals, shared direction, plans, strategies and mental models. Build teams, design new services and innovate. Use LEGO® Serious Play® to create deeper agreement processes.

LEGO® Serious Play® **Core Foundation Skills**

Build Level 1: Individual Model Building

Enhance communication on any issue. Develop ideas, build trust. Manage staff, set goals, offer feedback. Mentor and coach. Explore and agree values and behaviours. Unlock individual and group communication and learning on any topic.

Learn more:

serious.global/learn

Read More

Books

At time of going to press with this book there is only one other book written about LEGO® Serious Play®.

Building Better Business Using the LEGO® Serious Play® Method, published by Wiley sets out the history, territory and science that underpins LEGO® Serious Play®, and gives some brief case studies.

If you like to know more about the history, development, science and context of LEGO® Serious Play®, it's a good read.

Case studies

There are a growing number of case studies of LEGO® Serious Play® in use in a wide range of applications on the ProMeet website:

meeting-facilitation.co.uk/lego-serious-play-london

Join an online community

A great place to go to read case studies, post questions, and learn more is SeriousPlay-Pro. Whilst there are a couple of other online communities for LEGO® Serious Play®, the best and most active is SeriousPlayPro.com.

[@SeriousPlayPro](https://twitter.com/SeriousPlayPro)

So much more

It has been fun writing and designing this book, and yet it only really scratches the surface of the LEGO® Serious Play® world.

There is so much more that has been unsaid in this book, LEGO® Serious Play® has incredible power at the higher build levels and as the method grows and combines with other brilliant processes its potential as a tool for good expands.

We hope this book helps contribute to the inevitable evolution and development of LEGO® Serious Play® practice and pedagogy.

Connect

If you'd like to connect, you can find us here:

Serious Work

[@SeriousWrk](https://twitter.com/SeriousWrk)

Sean@Serious.Global

Sean Blair

[@ProMeetings](https://twitter.com/ProMeetings)

<https://uk.linkedin.com/in/sean-blair>

Marko Rillo

[@MarkoRillo](https://twitter.com/MarkoRillo)

<https://ee.linkedin.com/in/markorillo>



Final word

Thank you for reading this book. We hope you enjoyed it.

We started this book with a hypothetical foreword from the future. In our vision we sincerely hope to see that LEGO® Serious Play® will eventually become as common as flip-chart and markers. We hope to see LEGO® Serious Play® applied to businesses and schools. Taken up by coaches and councillors. We hope that it will become a tool of a new generation of leaders. Leaders who value participation and who preach and practice facilitative mind-set.

We live in challenging times.

Humanity has not yet learnt how to live in peace with each other or the incredible planet earth we are so very lucky to call home. And one of the biggest underlying challenges is to truly and deeply understand each other and the way we perceive complexities we face.

We think that humans have four ways of knowing.

First is the dominant mode of knowing with our thoughts and mind. Hey brain! You sure do think you rule the game.

Then there is the knowing of our bodies. Feelings, intuition and wise hands.

Then the heart knowing, that soars or aches with people we love.

And also the knowing of the spirit or soul.

LEGO® Serious Play® for its brilliance appeals to knowing of the brain and body. Heart and soul are more difficult to touch with a plastic cuboid. Yet, a combination of LEGO® Serious Play® with deeper human-to-human interaction helps to create a dialogue and reveal insights of the kind of insight LEGO® system models can reveal. Insight that can touch our feelings and enrich our spirits - now that's a tantalizing prospect.

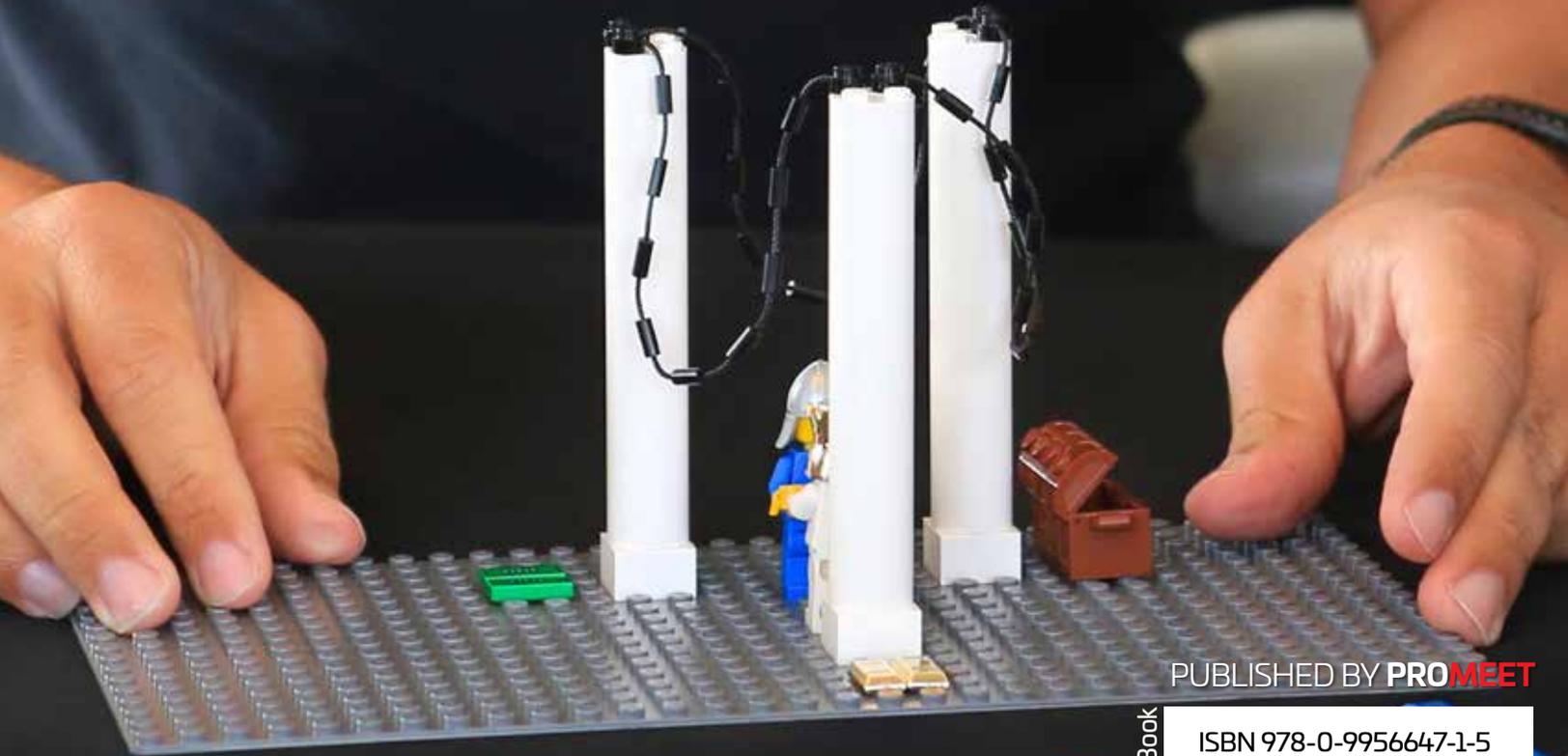
What if we could all become better and more participatory leaders and use the systems power of LEGO® Serious Play® to generate a more meaningful, deeper, and sustainable world-views and ideas. Then we could indeed come to situation where LEGO could turn into a serious tool that saved the world.

A fanciful vision?

Maybe, just maybe!



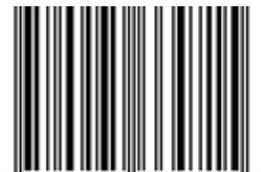
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