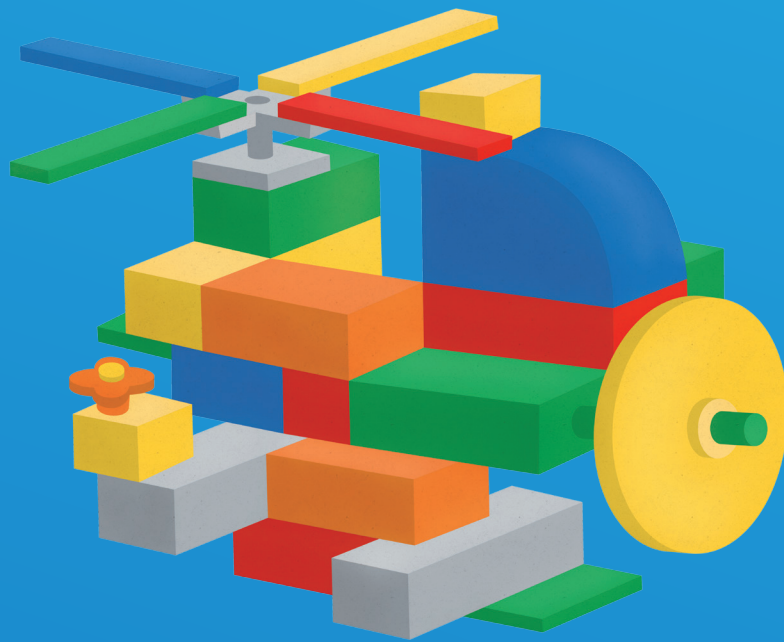


Build[™]
& Share



**Explore positive
psychology with LEGO®**

Build & Share Introduced - Explore positive psychology with LEGO®

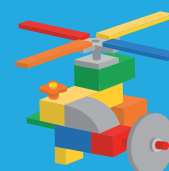
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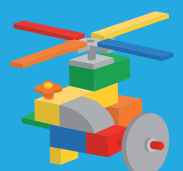
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Introduction

Build & Share is a group facilitation method that builds on theory, research and application within positive psychology and narrative practices. When applied in groups the method helps participants to gain a deeper, more meaningful understanding of topics, especially related to motivation, resilience and engagement.

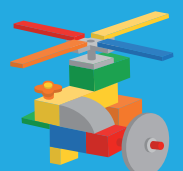
Build & Share is a method that provides an engaging and more memorable approach to shared understanding and self-exploration in areas related to well-being and optimal human functioning. Based on research showing that focussed hands-on learning produces a more meaningful understanding of the world and its possibilities, Build & Share deepens the reflection process and supports effective dialogue for everyone in the group. This is done by posing reflective questions and allowing participants to build their answer in LEGO® and respond by using metaphors and narratives they have created themselves rather than answering questions in a traditional way.

SHARING IS FUNDAMENTAL

It is crucial that each person's voice is heard during any group process. Everybody shares what is on their minds and everybody is listened to. This is very important in the Build & Share process as it lets everyone share their thoughts in a constructive way and gives them a chance to hear each other's points of view. Sharing is fundamental to Build & Share as it creates a common understanding of the group's way of dealing with a situation and gives the best starting point for people to feel ownership for the reflections and ideas expressed. Eventually this will help them to arrive at the solutions and actions that need to be taken in order for them to enhance both personal well-being and group performance.

WHO DEVELOPED BUILD & SHARE?

The method has been developed by Mads Bab who runs the Danish based consultancy Gnist (the Danish word for spark). Mads holds an MSc in Applied Positive Psychology, is an international keynote speaker, published author and part time associate professor at the Danish Positive Psychology Masters Program. The driver behind the creation of Build & Share is a dedicated approach to developing more powerful ways for (especially) groups to explore concepts within positive psychology. It is startling how few new interventions and group facilitation methods have been developed over the last decade. Build & Share is a dedicated approach aimed at enhancing the effect of scientifically validated interventions in groups by applying tactile elements to ensure a more tangible learning process.



APPLYING BUILD & SHARE IN YOUR WORKSHOP

Build & Share has been offered in various formats since 2009. It has been introduced with a very positive response at conferences in Denmark, USA and China. Now the time has come to offer this exciting method to other facilitators around the globe.

The method builds on a 3-step core process consisting of:

1. Questions that explore
2. Building meaning
3. Sharing & Reflection

Learning the method is easy, becoming proficient takes practice. This is why we offer the Build & Share Handbook and online community as well as exclusive certification courses once a year in Denmark and through partners around the world. Becoming a certified facilitator will give you the opportunity to market yourself and your offerings with the Build & Share brand.

See more at: www.buildandshare.net

Theoretical Grounding

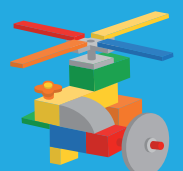
BASED ON THE STUDY IN POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Build & Share as well as positive psychology is concerned with optimal human functioning and wellbeing. Like positive psychology Build & Share explores the positive, adaptive, creative and emotionally fulfilling aspects of human behaviour in group settings. Positive psychology and Build & Share are both founded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives and to cultivate the strengths within them.

The aim when establishing the scientific field of positive psychology was to begin catalyzing change in the focus of psychology from primarily being concerned with mental illness and fixing what is wrong to explore and understand healthy states such as happiness, strength of character and optimism; in other words, to expand on what makes us strong.

Within positive psychology and Build & Share there are three fundamental aims of what psychology and our general focus in life ought to be:

1. I should be just as concerned with strengths as with weakness
2. It should be just as concerned with building the best things in life (strengths) as in repair-



ing the worst.

3. It should be just as concerned with making the lives of normal people fulfilling and with nurturing high talents as with healing pathology

From this point of view it is easy to see why positive psychology often is defined as the study of “what makes life worth living”.

Speaking about what makes life worth living, positive psychology and Build & Share embrace areas of study such as subjective happiness, optimism, gratitude, positive emotions, goal setting and accomplishment, flow experiences, values and character strengths. One of the common application areas of Build & Share is to explore character strengths within a group and its members. Research on character strengths is

one of the most fascinating parts of positive psychology when it comes to understanding issues such as engagement and motivation. The central point of character strengths is that when your attention is directed to your own strengths or those of other persons you are almost sure to be more constructive and self-determined in your approach because focusing on your strengths requires that you pay attention to your strongest character traits (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).



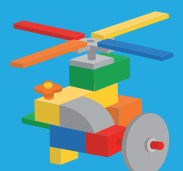
The character strength of hope & optimism

CREATING A HIGHER LEVEL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL

Build & Share is particularly useful in investigating the characteristics that create feelings of hope, self-efficacy, optimism and resilience within individuals but also collectively as a group and in organizations. Together those four components create the construct that researchers have named “Positive Psychological Capital” (PsyCap), which is defined as “an individual’s positive psychological state of development”. In other words, PsyCap can be used as a way of understanding well-being and Build & Share can be used to strengthen and develop both the individual and collective psychological capital.

Research has shown that PsyCap has a positive influence on performance and engagement in groups and organizations. The four components of PsyCap are defined as:

- **Hope:** persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed
- **Self-efficacy:** having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort



to succeed at challenging tasks

- **Optimism:** making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now
- **Resilience:** sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success

As PsyCap is concerned about an individual's internal resources for dealing with challenges at work, it is an emerging framework for applying a state based positive psychology to business settings. By developing employee's psychological capital organizations can create a competitive advantage.

PROSPECTION

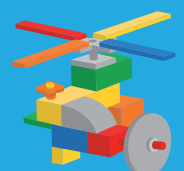
Coined by, among others, positive psychology pioneer Martin E. P. Seligman, prospection refers broadly to the mental representation and evaluation of possible futures. Prospection may include planning, prediction, hypothetical scenarios, teleological patterns, daydreaming, and evaluative assessment of possible future events. This ability to represent possible futures fundamentally shapes human cognitive, affective, and motivational systems and yet remains an understudied field of research. Effects of prospection on current cognition, emotion, motivation, and behaviour are also of interest.

Prospection is a ubiquitous feature of the human mind. For the past several decades, social science has concentrated on the antecedents of human action: how the past determines the present and the future. With the emphasized focus of prospection it might be possible to catalyze a change in the course of social science by moving prospection to the centre of research on human action.

UNDERSTANDING THROUGH A NARRATIVE APPROACH

As mentioned, research in positive psychology has produced a large body of scientific understanding about factors that contribute to our well-being and tools to help us flourish. We believe that narrative approaches can enrich the field of positive psychology and prospection by emphasizing and exploring the stories we create and tell about what works well in our lives.

Narrative approaches have developed useful ways to have conversations with ourselves and with others, to explore our values, skills, commitments and dream. Narrative approaches help us make sense of who we are and to bring us closer to how we prefer to be. It therefore seems apparent that together these three fields of knowledge, positive psychology, prospection and narrative practices can help us find ways to strengthen our preferred identities and to explore the strongest and most resilient versions of ourselves and the most beneficial version of the groups we interact in.



Narrative identity is the story a person constructs to organize and make sense of his or her life as a whole. It includes the person's reconstruction of the past and, in a prospective sense, his or her vision or dream about the future. Narrative psychology emphasizes the importance of stories in our lives because human beings organize their life experiences as stories through which they seek to find meaning. A story is a series of events that are linked together through time and these interconnected events have meaning for the person. As Margarita Tarragona (2008) explores in her fabulous workbook "Positive Identities", the stories we tell about our lives are not simply accounts of our experiences, they also generate experiences: how we feel, what we think as well as what possibilities and obstacles we see for ourselves. The same events can be "storied" in a variety of ways and these different ways will make a difference in how life is experienced. One of the central premises of narrative practice is that the ways in which we narrate our experiences have a big impact on how we think and feel, on how we see ourselves and our relationships, and how we relate to other people.



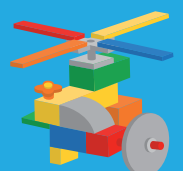
The character strength of courage

According to the narrative approach, understanding our identities demands that we understand our life stories. As expressed by professor in psychology, Dan P. McAdams:

"If you want to know me, then you must know my story, for my story defines who I am. And if I want to know myself, to gain insight into the meaning of my own life, then I, too, must come to know my own story. I must come to see in all its particulars the narrative of the self – the personal myth – that I have tacitly, even unconsciously, composed over the course of my life. It is a story I continue to revise, and tell to myself (and sometimes to others) as I go on living." (McAdams, 1996)

DEFINING OUR REALITY IN TERMS OF METAPHORS

Taking a metaphorical approach to narratives Professors George Lakoff and Mark Johnson argue in their book *"Metaphors We Live By"* (1980) that in all aspects of life we define our reality in terms of metaphors and then proceed to act on the basis of the metaphors. We draw inferences, set goals, make commitments, and execute plans, all on the basis of how we in part structure our experience, consciously and unconsciously, by means of metaphor. The metaphors we choose



to use and link to ourselves can have different effects on both our understandings and our actions.

The interesting thing with metaphors is their ability to unite reason and imagination. Reasoning, from the objectivist corner implies categorization where imagination is about seeing one thing in terms of another. By combining the two ideas metaphors become imaginative rationality and thus relevant to what LEGO® and its systematic creativity brings into the Build & Share method. LEGO® bricks are an effective tool to provide inspiration for metaphors as they come in many shapes and colours. They can be built into simple or complex forms as suits the personality of the builder, and research has shown that people from all walks of life feel comfortable attaching diverse metaphorical meaning to LEGO® bricks.

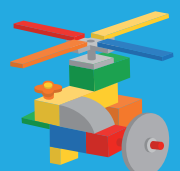
Learning in a social context

- WHEN GROUPS WORK AT THEIR BEST

Build & Share builds upon fundamental understandings about people and groups and how they best learn and grow. Social and group interactions are incredibly important and influence us every day; we live in groups, we learn in groups, we work in groups, we play in groups and we



Prospection in action; Group exploring future scenarios



worship in groups. Therefore it is valuable to consider individual behaviours in a social context to better understand ourselves and our personal identity.

OTHER PEOPLE MATTER

Chris Peterson, one of the co-founders of positive psychology, said that positive psychology could be summed up in three simple words - "other people matter". Our well-being is often entwined with other people who provide us with understanding, hope and meaning. At the same time it can be said that our knowledge and reality are actively created by social relationships and interactions.

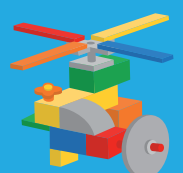
That is one of the main reasons why Build & Share is a group facilitation method that seeks to bring in the social context, that many traditional positive psychology based interventions do not.

The narrative approach that is central in Build & Share makes it possible to better understand optimal functioning and group dynamics through the discovery of situations and social contexts where specific patterns of energizing and authentic thoughts, feelings, and actions occur. As mentioned earlier we need to understand the stories that we have consciously and unconsciously composed over our lives in order to understand ourselves and how we interact in a group. It is important to note that we do not create these stories in a vacuum or out of the blue. The process of creating a narrative identity is dynamic and occurs interchangeably between social and personal processes developing a more complex psycho-social understanding of identity. In that context our social experiences and the way we interpret those experiences form our ideas about our identity and perception of reality. The themes from positive psychology that can be explored with Build & Share should therefore always be interpreted in a group context.

Build & Share sets the framework for people to explore different versions of themselves and others and investigate what characterizes their strongest and most resilient selves. It is a useful method to apply when the goal is to learn more about what is important and meaningful to oneself and others, and when dialogue and exploration of stories that form an idea about our identity and perception of reality are a key concern. Build & Share is especially useful when you want to improve both individual and group engagement at the same time, and part of the process is learning how to optimally use the topics from positive psychology individually and collectively towards a common goal.

GROUP DYNAMICS

Build & Share is an effective group oriented method that also deals with some of the challenging elements that happen within a group of people. One of the common challenges when working with groups is the way group dynamics influence individual behaviour, attitudes, and opinions. One group member may not personally agree with something the group does or says, but never-



theless just go along with the norm and publicly agree with the group and keep private beliefs to themselves.

This can happen because the person might feel unsure of his or her own opinion or because he/she is afraid of being different from the majority of the group or simply because the person has not formed a solid and clear understanding of the topic at hand. Research shows that people tend to go along with the majority view, even if that view is objectively incorrect or even contradictory to one's own beliefs. This phenomenon is what researchers call "groupthink" and it refers to faulty decision-making in a group. Groupthink dominates personalities and reduces innovation as it prevents the group from exploring all alternatives. One of the important features in Build & Share is that it helps to create an environment in which participants feel safe and comfortable sharing whatever they have on their mind. There is no right or wrong answer in Build & Share and individual differences are considered a benefit rather than an obstacle.

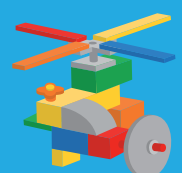
At the same time the participants get space and time for reflection during the building process without interruption. The result is a response not based on a hasty and shallow answer but a deeper reflection represented in a physical and visual outcome - the LEGO® model. This model cannot change during the sharing process, which makes Build & Share an ideal method for encouraging a more open and honest reflection. It creates a more comfortable and safe environment for people that tend to be introverted and reluctant. This will not only strengthen individuals, but also the group as a whole, because everybody's opinion will be heard. Thus the social capital and collective intelligence of the groups is increased.

Create knowledge and understanding

- USING A VISUAL, CREATIVE AND PLAYFUL METHOD

Build & Share helps you to build knowledge and create understanding about individual and group interaction through a positive psychological filter. It is based on a tool called LEGO® Serious Play®, which was developed by the Lego Company in 1999 with the assistance of two professors from IMD business school in Lausanne, Johan Roos and Bart Victor (J Roos & Victor, 1999; Johan Roos, et al., 2004). Build & Share combines the use of LEGO® with storytelling and areas within positive psychology to create individual and common understanding of abstract issues like values, character strengths, team identity and positive aspirations.

Build & Share makes use of the participant's unique ability to imagine, describe and make sense of a situation at hand, and to create something radically new. It can be said that human knowledge has an active constructive nature. We can use this constructive nature and the unique creative ability of the human brain to effectively investigate, develop and simplify knowledge about complex topics about ourselves and how we interact with people around us.



CONSTRUCTING KNOWLEDGE

Seymour Papert explores how people construct knowledge and learn things faster when the learner is consciously engaged in constructing a tangible object external of one's self – for example with clay or LEGO® (Papert & Harel, 1991). When people construct things out in the world, they simultaneously construct theories and knowledge in their minds. This new knowledge then enables them to build even more sophisticated things out in the world which yields still more knowledge, thus creating a self-reinforcing cycle of learning and creating. Papert further noticed that when people are creating tangible objects, they get in a deeply engaged state of mind similar to that of flow (Papert, 1994). In this case flow is described as an optimal state of intrinsic motivation, and is the level of engagement that people often reach when they are in a 'hands on' process.

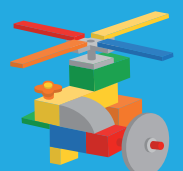
The Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget named this learning theory, constructivism and it can be summarized as “learning by making” or “thinking with your hands”. Build & Share was developed on the idea of constructivism – that we can use our hands to construct models of knowledge related to well-being and engagement issues. Using the hands to build understanding in three-dimensional representations of knowledge, ideas and feelings opens up a new path for free,

creative and expressive thinking. A surprisingly large part of the human brain is dedicated to controlling the hands. Therefore, when people construct things with their hands they simultaneously construct theories and knowledge in their minds. When we “think with our hands” we unleash creative energies, modes of thought, and ways of seeing that most adults have forgotten they even possessed.

The notion of “learning by making”, or “thinking with your hands”, draws on the use of play and expressive arts in therapy. These methods bring out insights and learning that intellectual reasoning might not have done on it. The Build & Share approach has shown that adults can regain their ability to play, which offers creative possibilities because it emphasizes freedom and plays down responsibility, self-consciousness and shame. This non-judgemental environment of play is more likely to foster surprising and innovative ideas.



Building my positive identity



PLAY IN A SERIOUS MATTER

Play is our natural way of adapting and developing new skills and can contribute to effective learning and understanding. Play can be defined as a limited, structured, and voluntary activity that involves the imaginary. That is, it is an activity limited in time and space, structured by rules, conventions, or agreements among the players unforced by authority figures and drawing on elements of fantasy and creative imagination.

This appliance of play in a “serious” setting is termed “Serious Play” . Serious Play is, however, not only an idea of applying the theory of play to a serious setting, but also a method that combines three-dimensional media (LEGO®) with the mode of play to create the context in which informants build models of knowledge with their hands.

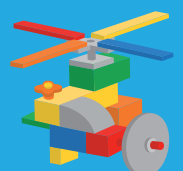
The state of play in Build & Share releases creativity as it facilitates a freer type of thinking without constraints. There are no right or wrong answers, which influences the participants to try novel things without being limited by the fear of being wrong. This is important when dealing with personal and underlying issues within the field of positive psychology. The playful environment that emerges when using Build & Share helps to set the right frame of mind for a comfortable and non-judgemental experience where the participants feel they are more equal, can talk freely, and where all opinions are appreciated.

At the same time the state of play in Build & Share adds value to the social bonding in groups. Not only because of the free and more playful environment, but also because it fosters understanding between participants as the players have to communicate and collaborate.

IMAGINE, CREATE AND REMEMBER

A key component in Build & Share is that it facilitates the benefits from using storytelling and metaphors. As earlier mentioned, we define our reality in terms of metaphors and the stories we tell about ourselves. In Build & Share the stories contribute to the construction, reproduction, or transformation of our reality and identity. Through the use of LEGO® the participants build metaphorical models that visualize and make meaning of abstract concepts that can otherwise be quite difficult to comprehend and even more difficult to share with others. The metaphors give a more complex creation of understanding and can make something more meaningful by explaining it through an external artefact. At the same time the use of metaphors and the way participants visualize abstract concept in a Build & Share workshop make it much easier for participants to remember.

Research has shown that the brain better handles and stores information through images and in that way makes use of visual elements to create new ideas and make more meaning of complex things. A Build & Share process takes advantage of the human ability to imagine things and create something radically new. This is a key capacity when we want to be more innovative, create



knowledge and develop ourselves and the group we interact in. In that context Build & Share enables three kinds of imagination: describing, creating, and challenging.

Our descriptive imagination is about seeing the world as it is. It enables us to identify patterns, to make sense of it and to see new possibilities and opportunities. When adding structure to information by building metaphors with LEGO® bricks we are effectively using descriptive imagination to focus on repeating patterns and to see things in a new way. The creative imagination allows us to see what is not there, which means we can develop and create new things and patterns. In Build & Share we use this imagination to generate new possibilities from the combination, recombination or transformation of the things or concepts we have built. The challenging imagination encourages us to negate, reframe, contradict and even challenge the sense of progress that comes from description and creativity. This enables us to look at things in new ways and thus be even more creative and innovative.

The creative, metaphorical and visual approach of Build & Share makes it a much richer and more memorable learning experience, which especially is an advantage when dealing with complex and abstract concepts within the field of positive psychology.

3-step core process

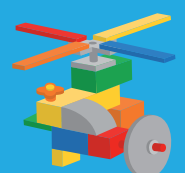
- FUNDAMENTALS OF A BUILD & SHARE WORKSHOP

In practice, Build & Share is a facilitated method, where participants are asked to create shared knowledge in relation to an ongoing positive personal, group and organizational development process. The fundamental is that participants build symbolic and metaphorical models of their insights in LEGO® and present these to each other. The strengths of the process lie in its cycles of building, reflection and collaborative learning.

The effective use of the Build & Share methodology rests on a 3-step core process, which ensures that people take ownership of their own learning. The three steps include:

1. Questions that explore

The first step is to define what the group will explore, and to understand the context and meaning of what they are about to learn. Considering the purpose of the workshop in advance, the facilitator has formulated each reflective question and its related building challenge in a way that will open up reflection and dialogue. The facilitator's choice and formulation of the building task is crucial for participants' experience of the process. When the process starts, the building challenge is posed to the participants and the building time is made clear. The facilitator then asks participants to build a model in LEGO® that expresses their thoughts on, or response to the building challenge.



An example could be: “build a model that represents a part of you when you feel things are going well in your worklife”.

2. Building meaning

The second step is the building process where participants build their response with a broad sample of LEGO®. The participants create a model connected to the area of exploration involving their own knowledge, reflections, and using their own hands. While building their models, participants assign meaning to them by means of metaphors, figures of speech and narratives. During construction of the model, the individual participants undergo a reflective process through which they gain a more clear and detailed conception of and insight into their own reflections and thoughts.



How to achieve a goal

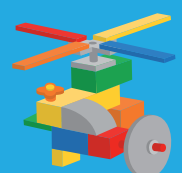
The building process both inspires and supports the reflective process, and participants are given a chance to think with their hands.

The fact that participants use their hands to build concrete, three-dimensional models of their reflections and ideas gives them easier access to the knowledge and experience that is stored in their subconscious minds as well as catalyzing new chains of thought.

3. Sharing & Reflection

The third step is where participants share their model and stories with each other. Emphasis should be put on the requirement that each participant gets the chance to share the story about their model. The sharing is in itself a reflection process, in that when they share their models participants explore their own expressions more closely. Those listening also have an opportunity to explore in more detail what the narrator expresses through his or her model. The facilitator plays a crucial part in this phase by asking follow-up questions. These questions are asked with the purpose of getting participants to reflect more and share more about their thoughts and ideas with each other.

As mentioned it is crucial that each person’s voice is heard during this process. Everybody shares what is on their mind, and everybody is listened to. This is very important in order to achieve the purposes of the Build & Share process: to let everyone share their thoughts in a constructive way and to give everybody a chance to hear each other’s points of view. Sharing is fun-



damental to Build & Share, creating both a common understanding of the group's way of dealing with a situation, and the best starting point for people to feel ownership for the reflections and ideas expressed. Eventually this will help them arrive at the solutions and actions that need to be taken in order for them to move forward as individuals and as a group.

The 3-step core process is repeated several times in any Build & Share session in order to ensure optimal learning and involvement. The 3-step core process of Build & Share builds on the insights about this effective learning process and relies on this specific structure to create an ideal environment for constructive reflection and dialogue. To exploit all the advantages of the method as a tool for constructive reflection and dialogue, it is imperative that the three basic steps are covered every time and in the correct order.

Creating a Build & Share workshop

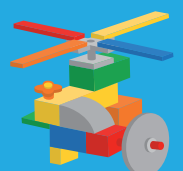
- SPECIFIC APPLICATIONS

SKILLS-BUILDING

The first part in a Build & Share process is the introduction or „skills building“, which consists of some lightweight building challenges that increases the participants skills in using the method rather than just rushing to the actual building process. In this way the participants become familiar with LEGO® and the democratic process of building, sharing and reflecting. At the same time the participants experiences some of the key features like the hand-mind connection and the use of metaphoric models.

The skills building must be taught to participants hands-on. It cannot be conveyed to the participants only verbally by telling people about the method and what they are supposed to do during the process. The participants have to experience it in order to come into flow with the method. Therefore it is necessary that the participants begin the session by doing a series of simple building challenges. Those challenges can for instance consist of these three steps:

1. To introduce participants to the use of LEGO® and to the experience that they are all able to build with the bricks, they are asked to each build a tower. The towers can be tested for stability by the facilitator, causing some of them to break. Participants will typically be sad to see their tower shatter, and this is taken as a learning point to illustrate the emotional connection we can quickly develop to things we have built with our own hands. When participants have built their towers, the facilitator can ask them to share something about their own tower – such as their immediate thoughts about it. Including the sharing phase at this stage will make sure that the participants are introduced to the basic phases of the process from the very beginning.



2. To introduce participants to the use of metaphors, the participants could be asked to build a vehicle of some sort. This step should take no more than 5 minutes.
3. Following this, the facilitator gives the participants about 2 minutes to turn the vehicle into a representation of themselves when they for instance are in flow. This is a turning-point which shifts participants into building on the metaphorical level. When participants have shared the meaning of their models, it will be obvious that each model has a number of different, metaphorical features which the facilitator can highlight in order to emphasize this special way of using LEGO®. This introductory challenge will also help participants to see that they can use LEGO® and metaphors to share a storyline and personal experiences.

After the skills building introduction almost every participant has experienced flow and feels comfortable with it. In the skills-building process it is a good idea if participants only have a small amount of LEGO® to choose from.

CORE BUILDING PROCESSES

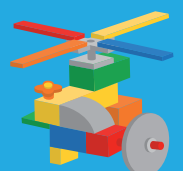
After skills building has been completed, the facilitator can start with the 3-step core building process, where the participants engage actively in a process with a specific focus or theme relevant for the group. During this phase the facilitator might also change into the role of teacher / lecturer by providing basic information about the topic. No matter the topic it is crucial, that the facilitator, prior to any use of LEGO®, conveys this theme and the scope of the workshop in an engaging way. After this introduction the 3-step core process is repeated while using LEGO® to construct different types of models.

Individual models

Even though Build & Share is a group-oriented method it always starts with the individual, and therefore the individual model building is the foundation of the Build & Share. After the facilitator has posed the question for exploration and set the stage for the process, the facilitator's role is to ensure that the builder does not get stuck – and if he or she does, to find subtle ways to help him or her move on.

There is no right or wrong way to build the individual models, but there are a couple of things that the facilitator should keep top of mind and emphasize for the builder:

- It is not about modeling and making a physical representation of what something looks like. It is about building an artifact that can help you make the story for the rest of the group.
- Don't get stuck in the engineering and design part. If the model doesn't quite look like



you wanted it, don't worry. When you tell the story, you can simply include your building intentions as well.

- The clue is: *"Don't think it! Just build it!"* When you don't know what to build, just start building and let your hands do the work.

When moving on to the sharing phase it is important that every story is heard and that the facilitator acknowledge what people share. The facilitator should inquire into the model and its story – not the person. It's important to always ask questions to get a more and clearer meaning for the builder as well as the listeners. Always ask about the model and the relationship between the model and the story, not the person and his/her intentions and reasons. Questioning the person's motives can destroy confidence and fragment the group. At the end of this sub-session the facilitator should aim to highlight key insights the group has shared, and to weave together the main learning points so that everyone will reflect on how far they have come.

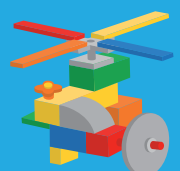
Building models of things you see in others

In Build & Share participants mostly build their individual models about something they see in themselves. However, it can sometimes be relevant for participants to build models of positive things they see in one or more of their group members. This strengthens the inter-group relationships and builds up trust, empathy and confidence among group members. The concept is particularly helpful for the individual group members to train their feedback skills and get more understanding for other people than themselves. Top performing groups, departments, companies and organizations always tend to have a culture of open positive communication, so encouraging the positive development of giving positive feedback to others is a simple yet fundamental aspect of improving group dynamics.

Another key benefit of this method is that it increases individual self-awareness through the feedback from others. The process of giving and receiving feedback is an important concept in developing, because feedback helps us see ourselves as others see us. Feedback is a reaction by others, usually in terms of their feelings and perceptions, telling us how our behavior affects them. According to the theory behind Johari's Window a good feedback process expands the group members 'open area', which express what people know about themselves. To operate most effectively and productively, groups need to expand their 'open area', as this



Sharing ideas and creating a shared vision



is the space where communication is good, with hardly any mistrust or misunderstanding. When group members give feedback to others, based on what they have built in LEGO®, the process becomes more easy and comfortable because the feedback is externalized in the model rather than given directly to the person.

Combining individual models

After building individual models participants can then create connections between models they have built. Connections are built between two or more models by organizing them in patterns. This can be done by placing the models at a certain distance and in a certain direction towards each other – or by physically building the relation between two models in a manner which represents their relationship.

The combination of individual models resembles the process of creating a landscape of all models described below.

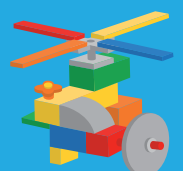
Creating a Landscape

Creating a Landscape is a technique for creating meaning among a collection of individual concepts without losing any of the original details and meaning. When participants create a landscape all the original models stays intact during the process. They use the space to position the models in relation to each other so the models form a “meta-story”. The position of the models both in their own right and in relation to each other is part of the meaning. The closer to each other the more close the original meaning of the models are and likewise if they are far apart from each the more different the meanings typically are.

Creating a landscape process can be used in situations where you want an overview of a group’s shared understanding – ex. strengths, values or goals. Or it can be used in a variety of other situations where you want to see the bigger picture and create an overview. The main goals of using the Creating a Landscape technique is to:

- See the bigger picture, create overview, categories and system without losing any details
- Categorize the individual models in bigger chunks of meaning
- Identify possible patterns and/or “red threads” in the collection of models
- Force all the participants to fully understand the others model stories
- Give the participants an opportunity to see how their stories relate to the others
- Allow for a certain priority to emerge

The process starts with all the models being placed randomly on the table. The group then



negotiates the placement of the models into a formation, where one meta-story encompasses all stories in a way everyone is happy with. A volunteer tells the combined meta-story to the whole group, and the facilitator checks with the rest of the group that the story has been told the way each person would have told it, and draws out key points, for clarification and retention.

This way of interacting physically with meaning and narratives is a feature that differentiates Build & Share from traditional group facilitation methods. Because the models are easy to remember, participants can interact with model i.e. stories other people have created. My moving these models around participants start a process of prototyping new knowledge in a way which would be impossible if insights and ideas were only contributed verbally.

Testing scenarios and strengthening prospection

Research has shown that the brain better handles and stores information through images and in that way use visual sources to create new ideas and make more meaning of complex things. A Build & Share process takes advantage of the human ability to imagine things and create something radically new. This is a key capacity when we want to be more innovative, create knowledge and develop ourselves and the group we interact in. In that context Build & Share aims to enable all three kinds of key properties of prospection : to describe, to create, and to challenge the future.

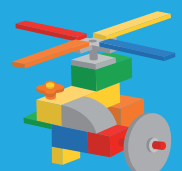
To expand their insights on future events and thus strengthen their ability to prospect participants interact with the models to explore how the “system” might react in relation to the overall scope of the workshop.

Practically speaking this part of the process has participants brainstorm ideas for what they could do to take advantage of an opportunity or encounter a challenge. The models are actively moved around to investigate the system and simulate the usage of these resources. Concretely, playing it out in the system makes it more real and more emotional.

Truly demonstrating the impact often requires some encouragement from the facilitator, because there may be a great deal of change happening in the original system. By now the participants will have become emotionally attached to their construction and it will make it harder for them to change the system. However, when it happens, exploring this in a safe but still realistic way, is exactly what makes the dialogue so power- and meaningful.

Building Shared Model

The purpose with building a shared model is to consolidate or negotiate the participant's individual models into one shared model. The method behind Build & Share is based on the belief that everyone in a group has valuable insights. When brought to the table, these insights will make the final outcome more than the sum of the individual pieces. The final model will be a coherent and



co-created story that encompass the essential meanings from each of the individual models.

The Building Shared Model is a group-decision process and is used when you want a group to agree on one shared answer to a question or challenge. For instance, If you want to build a shared goal for the group this process would be relevant.

In the Building Shared Models process it is crucial that the facilitator keep the following in mind:

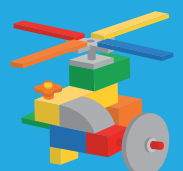
- A building challenge for shared models must always be posed as an individual building challenge before it is posed as a shared building challenge. This means that whenever a shared model is being built, participants have always built their individual response to the building challenge before they are asked to engage in the shared model building process. This ensures that everybody's voice is heard, and that everybody will have something to contribute to the shared model.
- Building a shared model should not be a matter of finding the lowest common denominators from the individual models. A shared model building process should have the purpose of getting as many details and nuances of the group's reflections in the shared model, and it should strive towards capturing that essence which each of the group members can accept and recognize as part of their shared reality. Reaching this will be the responsibility of the facilitator and requires excellent facilitation skills.

When the group has built their shared model, they usually find a volunteer within the group that tells the combined, unified story to the whole group. It is important that the facilitator checks with the rest of the group that the story has been told in a way each person can agree with. The facilitator also draws out key points, for clarification and retention.

Facilitating the process

- WHAT TO REMEMBER

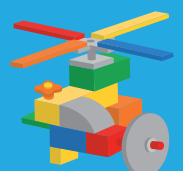
A Build & Share workshops should always be run through facilitation. The concept of facilitation is about leading processes to run optimally, to give the best possible results for the group and the group members. The fundamental meaning of the word facilitation is, 'making something (difficult) easier'. A range of definitions of what facilitation is all conclude that facilitation is about the process of helping people to explore, learn and develop.



The facilitator's task in Build & Share is to get the group's dialogue to serve its purpose and make the participants capable of expressing their reflections and ideas. The role of the facilitator is, therefore, to make the reflection and dialogue processes easier, and the main task is to help the participants express themselves, listen to each other, and take each other's reflections into account. The goal is not to drive the group to a certain conclusion, or a certain decision or opinion.

The behavior of the Build & Share facilitator is key to how participants experience the process, and to its success. When facilitating the process, the facilitator must keep the 3-step core process in mind, and employ behavior that expresses these basic values. The following guideline indicates how the facilitator should handle his/her role during the process:

- **Maintain flow in the process.** Be process-oriented and aware of participants' needs as the process develops.
- **Make equal access to the bricks:** The facilitator should ensure that participants should have equal access to a good range of bricks and pieces, so that they feel they have a pleasing opportunity to express themselves.
- **Assign clear building challenges:** Assign building challenges that are clear and serve the workshop's purpose. When creating the Build & share processes, the facilitator must take into account their knowledge about the participants' starting point.
- **Always start with individual tasks:** A building task must always be completed individually before it may be completed in a group. The level of reflection achieved in Build & Share is a movement from individual reflection to group reflection.
- **Use the Build & Share models actively:** Look for answers in the models and look for details about the stories, the thoughts, ideas and reflections in the models. When the LEGO® models are used actively in the process, they are ideally suited as tools to promote constructive reflection and dialogue. Therefore, the facilitator should keep focus on the models, i.e. trust the method and return to the models when facilitating the process. Remember that questions must be aimed at exploring the model and the relationship between several models and the story told. Never ask questions that require the person to explain why they intended the model to express what it does.
- **Avoid the role of a censor:** The facilitator must never decide the meaning of a model, and may never decide how relevant or irrelevant, or how good or poor, the models are.
- **Give everyone the chance to explain their model:** When participants are asked to build and do their best, it is crucial that they feel that their stories are listened to. Similarly, it is crucial that their contributions to the process are accepted and recognized—never as a simple truth, but as a way, that person shares their story today and from a personal



perspective. An important feature in Build & Share is that each participant has equal opportunity to express his/her feelings or ideas and become part of the outcome. This means that the facilitator strives to give each participant the necessary time to explain the individual models.

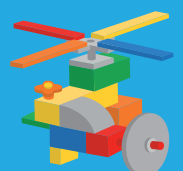
- **Pose good facilitating questions:** The facilitator's most efficient tool in the process is to ask questions and show genuine interest in taking a deeper look into the thoughts, feelings and ideas conveyed through the models and their assigned stories. Even though the facilitator must take this neutral position in the process, the facilitator still has a powerful way of influencing the process through the questions they pose. Good facilitating questions are an effective way of influencing the process.

ETHICAL GUIDELINE

The ethical guideline is built on a set of principles that are central to Build & Share and the thinking that lies behind it. The facilitator has the task of making the principles clear to participants throughout the process. To ensure the integrity of a Build & Share process, and to gain the greatest benefit, participants must remember and adhere to these principles, which state that:

- The answer is in the system. Therefore, Build & Share is all about participants expressing themselves and listening to each other.
- The multitude of contributions to the dialogue is the important part. The method has the overall goal of getting participants to express their reflections and thoughts — never to produce 'correct' answers or facts.
- Everyone has different views, and this is a good thing. The process enables these different perspectives to come out in the open without anybody saying which is 'right' or 'wrong'.
- There is no right and no wrong way to build. What the model looks like is not the most important thing. What is important is what the participants can share/ describe through the model.
- 'Think with your hands': If participants don't know what they want to build, it is often a good idea just to start building. The facilitator may encourage participants to do this and say that they should let their hands do the thinking.
- Everybody participates during the full process.

The LEGO® models are tools, and the model in itself is not the result – the model building is a helpful process while reflecting on an issue or problem, and the model is a tool for participants to express and to understand more. The meaning attached to each model is what makes it valuable. What counts, is the participants meaning for their model and only the person who built the



model knows what it means. This implies that:

1. Participants are free to ask questions about each others' models and stories—but they should not express an opinion about or interpret each others' models or stories.
2. The facilitator asks questions about the model and the story—not about the person. Focus must be on the model and the story around the model—not on the person describing the model.

Moving forward

We encourage everyone who is intrigued by the potential in the Build & Share method to simply give it a go. As long as you follow the 3-step core process, start with skills building and comply with the ethical guidelines you should be fine.

On www.buildandshare.net you can find out more about ordering relevant bricks in case you do not have enough (please do not steal you children's bricks).

We do, however, also encourage you to spend some more time getting acquainted with the method and encourage you to purchase our Build & Share book (due summer 2014). The book deep dives into the method and it's background. More importantly it offers a step by step instruction to offer a workshop that explores character strengths and a workshop to create a shared vision or aspiration.

One last, and very unique, opportunity is our Build & Share certification event offered once a year in Denmark. Read more about this engaging and playful certification event and how you can attend or help schedule one in your region.

Last but not least moving forward is also about reaching out. So call us if you are curious about Build & Share.

Contact:

Build & Share

www.buildandshare.net

Mads Bab

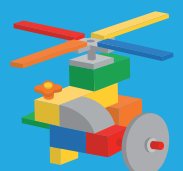
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