

Activity Guide



Learning and Working Together

Exploring collaboration, expectations, and needs in research partnerships through LEGO co-construction

Summary

Research is often a collaborative endeavour, especially in participatory and community-engaged projects. At its core, participatory research is about building relationships and learning together. It is through dialogue, shared experiences, and collaboration that knowledge is created and shaped.

Using the LEGO Serious Play approach, participants build and share LEGO structures that represent what they need to feel supported in learning and working together. LEGO Serious Play invites participants to respond to a question by building, then reflect on and share the meaning of their structures. As they explain their co-creations, they articulate their needs, expectations, and hopes for collaboration. As a result, they co-develop a shared understanding of what matters to the group.

This activity can be a meaningful starting point for any collaborative project, whether with youth or adults. The ideas that emerge can help inform shared principles, group agreements, or partnership practices that guide the work ahead.

Why It Works

Building with LEGO bricks offers a creative way to express ideas through symbols, metaphors, and stories. This can help make abstract concepts such as trust or communication more visible and easier to discuss. Focusing on the LEGO creations rather than personal experiences can also create a more comfortable space for sharing.

What You Need

- **Materials:** LEGO Serious Play kits
- **Time:** 45-60 minutes
- **Ideal Group Size:** 4-6 participants (multiple groups can run at the same time)
- **Format:** in person

How It Works

1. Welcome and Warm Up

10 mins

Invite participants to get to know one another and help create a comfortable space for sharing. Introduce the spirit of the activity: there are no right or wrong answers. We are here to explore, create, and have fun together.

Icebreaker activity: Ask each participant to choose a LEGO piece. After a moment of reflection, invite them to share why they chose that piece with their respective group.

2. The Invitation

5 mins

Before building, introduce the core LEGO Serious Play principle: participants will respond to a question by building. The LEGO structure is the answer. Encourage them to “think with their hands” and remind them that there are no wrong answers.

Invite participants to think of a positive experience learning or working with others. Then, present the guiding question: What do we need to learn or work well together?

3. Co-Construction

20 mins

Working in small groups, participants build a shared LEGO structure in response to the question. Encourage them to contribute their own ideas and perspectives. The goal is not to agree on everything, but to create a shared structure that reflects what participants believe is important for learning and working together. As they build, participants discuss their ideas and explore different perspectives.

4. Sharing and Reflection

25 mins

Invite each group to present and explain their LEGO structure to everyone. Encourage participants to describe the meaning behind the different elements of their construction and what they represent.

To conclude, invite reflection with questions such as: What stood out to you during the activity? Did anything surprise you? Is there anything you would add to your structure after hearing from the other groups?