

Achieving Resilience Through Play and Drama



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The Project

ARTPAD aims to support the engagement of children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in non-formal education to help prevent early school leaving. The project explores 3 complimentary aspects:

1. understanding resilience and children's development and behaviour through play
2. drama techniques for engagement with learning
3. drama and play to build social understanding and behaviour.

Intellectual Outputs

1. A Best Practice guide utilising the expertise of all partners, detailing existing best practice in regards to drama techniques for the building of resilience in participants in schools and youth settings.
2. A certificated course for teachers/ youth workers in drama techniques and play facilitation to support engagement with learning, resilience and behaviour.
3. An evaluation report with recommendations for lobbying and to influence of policy.
4. Delivery of pilot training and exchange of best practice ideas.

The Partners

The ARTPAD project is a three year project funded by Erasmus+. The project is a partnership of 5 EU countries:

University of Gloucestershire, Playwork Partnerships and the Drama Department - United Kingdom (project leader)

Rogers Foundation – Hungary
University of Gdanski – Poland
UWEZO – Germany
Hafelekar – Austria

Resilience

“Resilience or ‘psychological strength’ is directly involved in a child’s ability to cope with adverse situations. Resilience is the quality that allows the individual to persist in the face of challenges and to recover after difficult situations. Resilience strengthens the child, allows him/her to try new experiences, to accept challenges and to cope with situations of frustration and failure. Resilience supports the child in difficult situations and supports the achievement of dreams and personal aspirations.”

(Folostina et al. 2015:2364)

Play

“Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.”

(Playwork Principles Scrutiny Group 2005)

Drama

‘Drama is a means of learning, a means of widening experiences’ and the practitioner role is to ‘harness drama to his own needs; to use it in a way that will most aid him in challenging children to learn.’

(Heathcote et al. 1991:82-83)

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Central Principles

Principles underpinning ARTPAD of the importance of drama and play in supporting the development of resilience in children and young people.

We believe the following Principles are important for a pedagogical approach that recognises the role of drama and play when working with children and young people in re-engaging them in formal or informal education.

These Principles are also underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

1. **Methodology**
2. **Environment**
3. **Attitude of the adult**
4. **The individual within the group**
5. **Empowerment**
6. **Alignment**

1. Methodology

Both drama and the creation of spaces where children and young people can play have specific approaches and methodology that need to be understood. They also require a particular mind-set in order to support the development of resilience and child-driven, self-initiated learning.

2. Environment

The creation of an environment that considers both the human and physical aspects of the space will best support resilience and the engagement of children and young people in formal and informal learning.

3. Attitude of the Adult

The respect, relationship and support developed through a positive attitude from the adults around them plays a huge part in children and young people's self-confidence, resilience and overall development.

4. The Individual within the Group

An understanding of the impact of wider influences on the child, both from home and society is important when considering their development of resilience.

5. Empowerment

Play and drama support resilience through developing competencies in making individual choices, being in control of things happening around them and having an ability to influence these things.

6. Alignment

Alignment as a final principle: All our efforts should be aligned to support and facilitate the development of resilience for children and young people.