

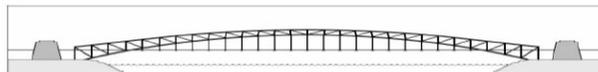


MILD

Multiple Intelligences in Leadership development

- 1st edition -

A partnership between
 alp-activating leadership potential, Austria
 Kamaleonte, Italy
 CLEAR – Centre for Learning Education Awareness and Revival, Ireland
 University College Syddanmark, Denmark
 Askorun, Island
 L'Ydille Lang, France
 De Waal Training & Consultancy, The Netherlands



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Appendix activities

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Appendix key-words

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1 Introduction

1.1 Aim and structure of the handbook

This handbook aims at collecting the processes and the outcomes that the partners went through in the 2 years of the MILD project. It is a structured collection of reflections and resources for anyone that would like to venture in their understanding of what the Multiple Intelligences are about and how to use them in adult education. It honours the work carried out by the partners together and in their own working contexts and it also serves as dissemination of a revisited consolidated practice of the partners.

The handbook explores the many questions the partners have been confronted with in trying to understand ‘what does it mean to work with the Multiple Intelligences’ in an era when everything is based on competences and it should be measurable (see the Bologna process). Further there is already a wide movement that supports the introduction of alternative approaches to education in general and in particular to adult education. These stress the importance of addressing the cognitive sphere by using means others than the ones “usually present in school’s contexts”.

The structure of the handbook starts with a chapter introducing the project – why did we take it up, what were the different stages of the project and what was the context and the target group of the partners.

The second chapter looks at the concepts and approaches, which we were exploring in our project.

The main part of the book (chapter 3 – 7) are the results built around the 5 leading questions, which developed through our exploration phase of the project.

Chapter 8 looks at the current outcomes and conclusions as well as issues that we feel needs further exploration. This is followed by an annex, with definitions, activities explored and references.

An additional outcome of our project is that all partners consolidated their prototypes and training offers. These seminars and workshops will be held on the open market and will be part of this handbook.

1.2 Why this project?

In our work as trainers and facilitators we have come across adults who are challenged to activate their personal learning processes and be a leader in this process. Many adults have difficulties in activating their learning process in developing leadership competences, although the

competences themselves may be present. Our assumption was this was partly due to the fact that current learning environments for adults are mostly based on a limited set of didactic methods. We wanted to explore and learn how leadership competences can be developed, using the idea that each person has multiple ways in which he/she can be intelligent. The question we ask ourselves is not “How intelligent am I” but “How am I intelligent”? as Howard Gardner has said.

Through a Grundtvig Learning Partnership with partners from seven European countries we developed model(s) for applying multiple intelligences as ways to develop (natural) leadership competences in our target groups.

1.3 Overview of the project

MILD stands for Multiple Intelligences for Leadership Development. The focus of this 2-year project was to

- EXPLORE the multiple intelligences through experiences/activities for adults
- DISCOVER my multiple intelligences in my Leadership (each person individually)
- UNDERSTAND the impact of my multiple intelligences in my leadership
- IDENTIFY Leadership competences to develop
- CHOOSE the most suitable ways for me to develop them.

1.3.1 Project partners

The following partners were involved:

- alp - activating leadership potential (Austria) is a network of professionals who are passionate about leadership and learning. ALP's members combine academic and practitioners backgrounds and experiences in the field of education, personal and organisational development from all over the world
- Askorun (Iceland) is a private training provider on personal and professional development, team-building, problem-solving, communication, inter-cultural learning and group dynamics for the private sector, institutions and youth groups. They work with experiential learning and preferably in out-door settings

- Clear (Centre for Learning, Education, Awareness and Revival, Ireland) is an NGO working with the life long learning approach offering training and facilitating for people with fewer opportunities in life.
- De Waal Training & Consultancy (Netherlands) support learning processes. It operated in many business sectors in different roles: LearningCoach, trainer, facilitator, developer of learning materials and learning consultant on topics such as communication, leadership and self management.
- Kamaleonte (Italy) is an educational organization that promotes the growth and psycho-physical health of groups of students, young people, adults and educators through outdoor sport and experiential training and learning methodological approach.
- L'Ydille Lang (France) is an intercultural organization engaged in promoting non-formal education. It organizes language courses for adults, study visit, European exchanges and training for trainers in the intercultural field and ad-hoc activities for disadvantages (young) adults.
- University College South Denmark offers a wide range of higher education programmes at all levels, with emphasis on first-cycle bachelor degrees in the field of Educational sciences, Health Sciences, Social Sciences and Communication Sciences.

All partners have a long-standing experience in training adults as leaders of their lives in different contexts. Their strengths lay in their diversity in coming from different countries, having different backgrounds and experiences. What they had in common is that they all work with active/ experiential learning methods.

During the project the permanent team of project partners was extended with temporary guest members who attended one or two mobilities because their expertise, contribution and feedback was valuable for the project as a whole.

Each project partner has been involved in the exploration and testing of the selected Multiple Intelligences and in preparing the handbook experiences and results/recommendations.

1.3.2 Grundtvig-Project in 3 phases

In this project, which was supported through the Grundtvig Programme (Life Long Learning), the partners developed and tested a variety of methods and approaches for the individual intelligences according to Howard Gardner (logical-mathematical, linguistic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, musical, spatial-visual, kinaesthetic, naturalistic, spiritual).

Resulting from the shared understanding of their common learning each partner designed different training offers for their target group exploring the impact of specific intelligences in Leadership development.

The 2-year-projects (2012 – 2014) consisted of 3 phases:

The (self)-exploration of the Multiple Intelligences (09/2012 – 09/2013);

In the first phase of the project the partners explored the concept of the nine intelligences of Howard Gardner and looked into other neighbouring concepts, such as the ethical, moral and the cultural intelligence. Out of our reflections, we agreed that we would not test the latter, because we felt that we could not identify them as pure intelligences, as we thought they could be considered more competences than intelligences. Additionally we wanted to stick as close as possible to the 9 multiple intelligences of Gardner.

Following a first theoretical discussion, each partner took the responsibility to develop a one-day-workshop on one or two intelligences creating or choosing experiential and active activities out of their trainers' experience, which could be related specifically to the intelligences. The activities in this workshop were experienced by the other members of the partnership and were followed by a reflection process, where partners questioned themselves if the activity was addressing that specific intelligence and how it could be improved to better activate it. At the same time we framed the activities with several reflection questions, which were relating the different Multiple Intelligences to leadership. When Gardner speaks of Multiple Intelligences he refers to them as talents, something we are born with, core capacities that we "invoke to carry out different tasks, solve diverse problems, and progress in various domains"¹ whereas competences can be acquired, trained and developed. Out of our experience we have noticed that adults are less natural and instinctive than children when behaving and relating to others and it might happen that multiple intelligences that are activated naturally, almost as if they were written in the DNA of the individual, can be partly hindered by competences and/or social, cultural and family pressure. After a period of time going through this self-testing phase, we were in doubt, if during the activities, in order to take the lead and influence the group decisions, we were using our strongest intelligences or our competences.

At a second stage, in order to identify our own intelligence profile, we focused more on the impact that the activities had on us and we questioned ourselves on how comfortable and enjoyable they were to us. This was a key point that helped us realize that the context and the challenge influence the specific and unique intelligence profile of the individuals.

The exploration of the intelligences done during the partners' meeting brought several questions related to the creation of the learning environment:

- the learning process itself;
- the concepts and theories on learning;
- the leadership models and theories;
- what is development and to support it;

¹ Gardner, Howard: Frames of mind.

- the level of awareness of the learner in the process;
- the “interference” of the trainer in the development process;
- the difference between using the Multiple Intelligences and using active methods.

Many other questions were risen and some of them came back several times in different partners meetings as the insights of the on-going exploration brought new perspectives to the conclusions previously made. Understanding contents from several perspectives and by using different ways to get to it is a long non linear process in the hands of the learner. In our exploration the contents became clearer and clearer through the several explorations of the single intelligences that brought us to see more the interconnectedness of them and the overlapping nuances of several intelligences.

Each partner had the possibility to get in touch with the contents several times in a circular way, sometimes being in the forefront when designing and delivering the exploration experience to the other partners and sometimes by being on the receiver side. Both sides were full of leaning opportunities. Some of these learning and insights were shared, some stayed with the learners.

Aware that during the testing phase new questions can emerge, the partners agreed on 5 leading questions - that were considered the core of the learning partnership – that could serve as common guidelines in the variety of experiences each partners could test the Multiple Intelligences. However when deciding on the contents of the questions, we took into account the fact that partners could see them from different perspectives due to our diverse expertise and understanding of the topics addressed. The 5 leading questions are:

- Are the Multiple Intelligences a valid way to learn in adult education?
This question is explored in chapter 3. It links the dimension of learning and entering into a lifelong perspective.
- How can the use of the Multiple Intelligences, in structured/learning settings, raise the awareness in the learners about themselves as learner?
This question focuses on leaders that are in a learning process - and not every type of learner – functional to their leadership development. It tackles the dichotomy of personal and professional development and it seeks the conjunction point. It also explores the aspects of the level of awareness and understanding necessary for consciously learning. See chapter 4.
- How far is using active methods and experiences a more effective way to know/identify my Multiple Intelligences rather than tests only?
We are explaining why active methods and experiences tell you more about your intelligence profile than a written test only. More on chapter 5.

- How do the Multiple Intelligences support learners understanding the contents?
In this question learners are considered the leaders that are in a learning process. The focus is on how far the methods are also a valid way on one side to deliver contents and on the other side to be able to process and generate knowledge. A full exploration of this you can find in chapter 6.
- How does the knowledge of the Multiple Intelligences support leadership?
This question is related to the concept of strengths based leadership that stresses the importance of being aware of one's own strengths in order to use them as leverage for creating a self-made leadership style and therefore being authentic and sustainable. Chapter 7 presents the ambivalence of the results of the testing phase.

Testing Phase: cross-country and national prototyping of learning experiences for leaders – based on the Multiple Intelligences (10/2013 – 06/2013):

Each partner held a testing phase in their own environment and with their own target group. Additionally some partners organised some cross-country testing between two or more partners.

The length of the tests varied from some hours to a full week training. In the testing phase some partners organised individual sessions for some hours, some held workshops which lasted a day and some did a full week training/seminar. The workshops, seminars were conducted with an experiential learning approach and consisted of a mix of short theoretical inputs, group discussions, concrete exercises and experiences, that were followed by reflecting individual and group moments. In some seminars and trainings the partner also used the written test as a start to get participants acquainted with their intelligences.

Some trainers planned their testing activities solely on the discovery of the Multiple Intelligences; some included sessions in a broader programme and some worked with the Multiple Intelligences only by observing what happened during the activities and sharing it with the participants. The nature of activities provided and the methods used tapped on the whole range of the characteristics of the nine intelligences explored.

In the longer trainings participant were provided with a “learning log” where they could take notes of their reflections, insights and learning. Learning buddies (=reflection partner) met daily during the training course to tease-out and to share insights, of the day and from the journals during their meetings.

Through experiential learning sessions of different durations and kind of activities, we experimented with “real learners” how to process an experience using the MIs lenses to read intrapersonal, interpersonal and group dynamics and behaviours. In line with the principle to value differences, each partner has conducted his testing phase using his own way, sensitivity and style.

The results of our project come on one side from our observations, but also from the feedback of participants. This means, while participants were involved in the activities the trainers observed their different behaviours and tried to link them to the theoretical concept of MI and to the results of the self-exploration phase. Then trainers asked participants for feedback on the impact of the different activities on them and if the knowledge and awareness of the concept of the Multiple intelligences was useful for their learning and development.

Harvesting the results (05-07/2013)

The results of the testing phase were firstly collected by all the partners mainly taking into account the guidelines embedded in the 5 leading questions, then shared and analyzed in the conclusive meeting, where attention was given above all to what could be the common elements coming out of participant’s feedback and trainer’s observations. Of course also the differing outcomes were taken into account and partners sought what were the elements that could have made the difference.

In the last meeting the partners developed the outline of the handbook and each partner took the responsibility for merging the inputs coming out from the discussions around the different topics. To value the differences of the realities of our partners we decided that each chapters would be elaborated by a minimum of two partners.

1.4 Context of the project

Understanding the context in which the project was developed is an essential element to understand how we came to certain shared results and what is their significance. It’s important to specify that by context we mean the multi cultural, environmental and learning situation, in which the project was carried out.

Multi-cultural setting

The project has put together people and organizations with different cultural backgrounds, diverse educational approaches and professional experiences. Since the beginning, these diversities were a real challenge to our cooperation. Much time and energy was devoted to create a common understanding of the organizational process, of how we wanted to explore the learning process and the outcome and results of the project. The multicultural context was indeed rich in diverse stimulus and potentialities and it turned into a cooperation process due to the

common effort of all partners. They got acquainted with each other and took initiative to value the different experiences and skills. They were all sharing a common objective and were motivated in creating the learning context that the project required.

Learning context

Indeed the main challenge for the partners of the project was that of defining and creating the learning context. Out of our common objective of exploring the multiple intelligences to see how these, through experiential learning activities, support leadership development, we discovered pretty soon *by doing* that partners all had a different understanding of leadership and of the experiential learning methodological approach. This diversity was initially not taken into account, however it allowed us to approach the project as peer learners. Certainly, regardless of our diversities, peer education represents for us the mutual learning context where our learning community could grow.

Environmental context

In order to value the diverse cultural backgrounds and to learn from each other, we organized mobilities strategically, taking into account the environment of the countries and the expertise of the partners involved in the project. Some of the activities were held indoors and some outdoors according to the selected intelligences. For example in Italy we decided to choose a medieval monastery as the scenario to run the activities related to the spiritual intelligence. In Austria a drum session and the museum in the dark to test the musical intelligence. In Iceland, the nature to test the naturalistic intelligence and an amusement park in the Netherlands to test the interpersonal intelligence. We also chose for the team in the Netherlands one large apartment for the accommodation in order to explore further the interpersonal intelligence by living side-by-side.

Throughout this exploration we gained awareness on the importance of choosing the learning environments in accordance with the learning objectives.

1.5 Target group

The target groups of the partners are varied. They consist generally of adults and leaders and some are young adults coming from disadvantaged areas. The participants are on the search for motivation and new ideas to make a change in their lives. They are willing to undergo a process of self-development.

Participants are not necessarily already in a leadership position. Some just started their professional work-life, some are members of teams and some are already in a management positions.