Join THE GAME

Erasmus+ project (2022-2024)

A GUIDE

TO ADAPTING AN URBAN GAME TO THE GROUPS' NEEDS

Intellectual output 2

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INTRODUCTION

Adapting the game to different groups' needs is important to ensure that the game is enjoyable and relevant to all players. The process of adaptation involves **identifying the needs of the group and customising the game elements to fit the characteristics of the players.** This ensures that each player feels engaged and has the opportunity to learn and enjoy the game. This guide will give you tips on how to tailor the game experience to your group of players.

INSTRUCTIONS

on how to identify the needs of the group

To better understand the group you'll be playing the game with, it will be helpful to learn about some of the players' traits. Think of a person who represents your group of players and try to answer the questions below. If you don't have all the answers, involve the group in the game preparation process (see section 4.4) to gather missing information.

- How old is your average player?
- What is their highest level of education?
- Do they live in an urban or a rural area?
- What do you think are their main obstacles in life?
- Do they have any particular interests?
- How aware are they of women's empowerment and gender equality issues?
- What are their most distinctive characteristics?
- Are you aware of potential neurodiversity among your players, such as ADHD, ASD, or dyslexia?
- What other characteristics of your players are important to consider?
- Will you be playing with a group of players of different genders?
- Is the group playing the game composed of individuals who already know each other, or is it a new group?

For inspiration, you will find below the profiles of players created by the partners of the „Join THE GAME" project.

Players' profiles

Aran

Aran is a dynamic and curious University student between the ages of 18 and 22. With a thirst for knowledge and an adventurous spirit, Aran embraces new experiences and constantly seeks to expand their horizons. However, Aran grapples with various challenges rooted in gender, social class, origin, language, and more.

Vanja

Vanja is a high-school student aged between 13 and 17 navigating life in a poverty-stricken rural community where educational opportunities are scarce, especially for those like Vanja who face the additional hurdle of dyslexia. As a shy individual, Vanja finds expression through art. Vanja is not used to experiencing the empowering support of their elders or peers and has yet to learn about the importance of gender equality as a fundamental human right.

Kasia

Kasia is a teenager, aged between 13 and 17, who lives in a rural area where traditional values prevail. The local schooling system reflects these values, characterised by strict rules and limited room for creativity or open discussions. Due to the distance between home and school, Kasia spends a significant amount of spare time commuting on public transportation. Kasia yearns for more in life and is concerned about their future. However, they lack a role model who can inspire and empower them. The elders in Kasia 's life, especially their mother, fail to understand their ambitions and often dismiss their concerns, saying, "You have everything, why are you complaining? Fortunately, Kasia finds solace and a channel for their ambition through sports, particularly handball, at which they excel.

Alex

Alex is a young adult, aged between 18 and 29, living in a large city. They dropped out of high school due to difficult life circumstances involving poverty, racism, sexism, etc. These experiences have influenced how they speak, dress, and understand society. Alex is struggling to find a clear direction in life. They spend most of their time in front of screens, watching sports, TV shows, and scrolling through social media. While they have some basic knowledge about gender equality and personal growth, their current environment may not provide the stability they need to make positive changes in their life.

Once you have a better idea of your target group, you can see below how the different game elements can be adapted to their needs.

GAME *elements*

HOW TO ADAPT?

Welcome the players, open up the game, set the scene

Depending on the age of your players, their level of awareness of women's empowerment and gender equality issues, the gender composition of your group of players, etc. the game opener can be customised.

The opener should be **simple**, **clear**, and **welcoming**, providing an overview of the game's objectives and the role of the players. Setting the scene should also take into account the players' unique characteristics, interests, and major obstacles in life to ensure that they feel engaged and motivated from the start.

Below you will find some information that can be useful in designing this part of the game experience.

- Video introducing the „Join THE GAME" project: **>> LINK**
- Video on girls' and young women's professional aspirations: **>> LINK**
- Video on the experiences of women who work in traditionally masculine roles: **>> LINK**

Choose the game area

Just as the game opener, the game area should be chosen with your players' circumstances and needs in mind. Not only is it important to choose an area that is easily accessible to all players but it also lends itself to different objectives such as making the group discover something new, e.g. players who rarely leave an urban area might benefit from a little excursion in the nature and vice versa or else, players who are not very confident exiting their city district would benefit from an experience in a different part of town, provided it is safe.

Decide on the game tasks

The „Join THE GAME" kit includes questions about inspiring women from the four project partner countries (Croatia, Poland, Spain and Belgium) who have accomplished exceptional feats in their professional careers. The project partners made sure that information necessary to answer the questions is easily accessible online, in some cases with the help of an online translator). According to your preferences and the needs of your group, the questions can be changed, their level of difficulty could be adjusted, or new questions can be added to extend the game experience.

Should you decide to create new questions, keep in mind that game tasks should be designed to challenge players of different difficulty levels. For instance, younger players or those with limited knowledge of women's empowerment and gender equality issues may need simpler tasks, while more experienced players may require more complex challenges. The tasks should also reflect the players' interests, and the game's objectives should be made clear to ensure that everyone understands the game's purpose.

Easy LEVEL:

The answer should be a name, a date, a very specific situation, a number, etc. It should be short (max. 2-3 words). Example: "She constructed the first version of…"

Difficult LEVEL:

The answer should be more open, engaging the payer into a story, a process, etc. Example: "Her support system was…"

Choose the task's hiding spots

Similarly, the hiding spots of the tasks should be chosen according to different players characteristics like physical ability, age, etc. It is important to ensure that the hiding spots are accessible to all players and do not present any significant obstacles. Hiding spots should also be in areas where the players feel safe and comfortable.

Support and guidance during game play

Different players may require varying levels of support and guidance during the game, depending on factors such as their age and experience. Younger players, for example, might benefit from more attention and assistance, whereas more experienced players may prefer a greater degree of independence. It is the responsibility of the game facilitator to offer adequate support to ensure that all players feel motivated and engaged.

To fulfil this role effectively, it is essential to establish clear lines of communication and be readily accessible to provide assistance when needed. In the case of a large play area, it is recommended to designate a visible location where the game facilitator can be easily located throughout the game. By doing so, players can readily seek guidance or help whenever necessary.

Furthermore, it may be helpful to share contact information, such as a phone number, with one player from each group. This allows for a designated point of contact in case of emergencies or urgent situations that may arise during the game. By providing participants with access to this contact information, they can feel reassured that help is readily available should the need arise.

Post-game discussion

Post-game discussion can also be tailored to the players' characteristics and interests. The discussion should provide an opportunity for players to reflect on the game's objectives and outcomes. It should also be an opportunity to discuss women's empowerment and gender equality issues in a way that is accessible and engaging to all players.

- Check the „Tips for playing, roles and tasks" for some phrases to stimulate the debate after the game.
- Check the „Safe Space Cheat Sheet" to create the setting.
- Assign someone to take notes during the discussion to capture important insights, ideas, and suggestions raised by participants. These notes can serve as a reference for future initiatives or follow-up discussions.
- Conclude the discussion by summarising the key points and thanking the participants for their engagement. Encourage individuals to continue the conversation beyond the session and consider sharing resources, such as articles, books, or documentaries, that delve deeper into the topics discussed.

Closing ceremony/prizes

The closing ceremony and prizes should be designed to reflect the players' characteristics and interests. For instance, younger players may prefer more playful prizes, while older players may prefer more serious rewards. The closing ceremony should also provide an opportunity to reflect on the game's objectives and outcomes, and to celebrate the players' achievements.

Participants tend to expect something after finishing the game – to have a winner or a prize. In our game we focus not on the goal, but on the journey leading to the goal. There's no winners and we are celebrating reaching our goal. We propose to prepare some kind of celebration based on your possibilities and budget.

- Small prizes related to topic of the game (stickers, sensory toys, pencils with text – shops with trifles offer cheap and funny gift ideas);
- Snacks and sweets (muffins, candies, cookies – they can be related to the topic);
- Celebration area (you can prepare a space with snacks and related content – articles etc, place that is "pictures friendly" with props and accessories and show a short movie we made presenting role models and teenagers from Europe);
- You can prepare special music after finishing the game like Chariots of Fire to make it more fun;
- You can prepare certificates for participants - serious or funny ones.

GAME *versions*

The standard version of the game is a hybrid version with printed tasks but assuming that players have access to a smart phone with internet connection to find the answers. If necessary, however, the game can be adapted to situations where players have no access to technology. In that case, instead of hiding and looking for the game tasks, the questions could be provided and the players would have to look for info sheets containing the responses, which would have to be prepared in advance.

Online-only version

This game version is perfect when you don't want to print a lot and have the possibility to stick printed QR codes to walls, statues etc.

Preparation

1. Tasks: prepare 8 different Google Forms (a separate form for each task). Paste the introduction (page 5 on the standard version of the game) into the description section, then paste the question about a woman into the question section. Choose 'short answer' for the answer option.
2. Copy link for Google Forms users (usually 'send' button and generate link), then generate a QR code using a free application (easily found via Google). Create 8 separate QR codes for the 8 Google Forms.
3. Check if the generated QR code is correct and sends you to the Google Forms page (user view, ready to fill the answer).
4. Print QR codes in high quality and stick them to the walls/ statues etc.
   - similar to hiding envelopes in the standard version of the game.
5. If needed, create a map with tips where to find the hidden QR codes.
6. Make sure that the players know how to scan QR codes.

When playing

1. Instructions for the game are a little different now. There is no need to have a piece of paper and a pen to write down the answer.
2. During the summary if you have a possibility - use a projector to check and talk about the answers.

TIPS

- There is no need to prepare the map if the space for playing is not too big and QR codes are easy to find (but not too easy).
- Make sure that at least one person per group has a good internet connection.

Offline-only version

This game version is perfect when you don't have internet access while playing or know that players' devices are not suitable for playing the game.

Preparation

> 1. Prepare stories or articles about the women presented in our game - you can use Wikipedia, other information found online, ChatGPT or similar applications. Make sure that a) the answer to the task is included in the story and b) the font is big enough and visible from a distance and the story is understandable for your target group.
> 2. Print the stories (separate pieces of paper for each story) and place them in accessible and visible places. Put information about the location of the stories on the map.

When playing

> Instructions for the game are a little different now. There is no need to use the internet/smartphone to look for answers.

Game about women from one specific field

This version is recommended when you want to focus on promoting a specific career path. It is worth choosing women according to the intersectional key, i.e. with different origins, experience, and different levels of success.

Preparation

> 1. Choose 8 different women from one field. Read their biographies and choose interesting facts about their professional lives. Try to avoid questions about their private lives - focus on their skills and achievements.
> 2. If there is none or very little information about women representing your field of choice, you can always contact them personally, create stories about them, then use those for the offline game. You can also use the opportunity to share her story online.

Creating a game together with your target group

This version is perfect when the game is part of a longer process and you have time for additional workshops with a group (minimum 2 hours) - preferably a few days before the game.

Preparation

1. Plan a workshop with a group during which you can talk about
   - the aim of the game;
   - interests and dreams;
   - knowledge about the job market.
2. Remember to plan some icebreakers and activities which will help the participants to get to know each other and have some fun.
3. During the workshop divide your target group into two groups. The first group will prepare the game for the second and vice versa.
4. Encourage them to choose their own theme for the game, for example: women in IT, women from one country, women from similar backgrounds etc. Each group should have their own theme.
5. Show them tasks from the standard version of the game as an example of how to prepare questions about the women.
6. Give them some time for research and for preparing questions. Make sure they have access to knowledge resources such as the internet, books, etc.
7. Make sure the first group does not see the questions of the second group before the game and vice versa.
8. Print questions or create Google Forms (tips above): choose a version with the group.
9. First group will create the game for the second group and vice versa.

When playing

1. Instructions for the game are a little different now. There is no need to have a piece of paper and a pen to write down the answer.
2. During the summary if you have a possibility - use a projector to check and talk about the answers.

INSTRUCTIONS

on how manage the group

So far, the game animator has learned about player characteristics and how to adapt game elements to their needs. In order to further customise the game elements, the animator may have also followed the instructions to involve prospective players in preparing for the gameplay. Now, it's time to consider group dynamics.

The tips provided in this section will help the animator manage the group of players to foster AN INCLUSIVE AND WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT where everyone can participate, have fun, and feel valued:

1. Establish clear expectations: Start the workshop by setting clear ground rules and expectations for everyone's behaviour. Emphasise the importance of respect, active listening, and inclusivity. Make it clear that everyone's input is valuable and that bullying or disrespectful behaviour will not be tolerated.

EXAMPLE
If a participant interrupts another one while they are speaking, address it immediately by saying, „In our group, we value active listening and respect for one another. Let's give each person a chance to express their thoughts before jumping in."

2. Icebreaker activities: Begin the workshop with icebreaker activities that encourage interaction and help participants get to know each other. These activities can be fun and engaging, breaking down barriers and creating a sense of camaraderie among the group.

EXAMPLE
Have participants pair up and interview each other, then introduce their partner to the rest of the group, highlighting their partner's interests and hobbies.

3. Encourage teamwork: Explain that playing the game requires teamwork and collaboration. Assign mixed groups with individuals of different genders, backgrounds and temperaments. This helps with bridging the gap between extroverted and introverted participants and promotes mutual understanding and cooperation.

EXAMPLE

Divide participants into groups and encourage each group member to contribute their ideas and work together towards solving the tasks.

4. Use a variety of teaching methods: Cater to different learning styles by employing a mix of teaching methods. Incorporate visual aids, group discussions, and individual reflections. This ensures that participants with varying levels of focus and interests can engage with the material in ways that resonate with them.

EXAMPLE

When explaining a concept, use visual aids like the videos created by the partners of the „JoinTHE GAME" project to appeal to visual learners.

5. Foster active participation: Create an environment where everyone feels comfortable expressing their opinions. Encourage active participation by asking open-ended questions, allowing sufficient time for responses, acknowledging and validating each participant's contribution.

EXAMPLE

Ask open-ended questions during group discussions and give each participant an opportunity to share their thoughts. Encourage quieter participants by saying, „I'd love to hear your perspective on this topic."

6. Provide opportunities for leadership: Give participants opportunities to take on leadership roles or responsibilities during the workshop. This can help boost confidence, develop teamwork skills, and encourage quieter individuals to step forward and engage with the group.

EXAMPLE

Assign rotating leadership roles within the groups, allowing each participant to take charge of guiding the group. This can help build their confidence and provide a platform for them to showcase their leadership skills.

7. Address bullying and disruptive behaviour: Monitor the group dynamics closely and be proactive in addressing bullying or disruptive behaviour. Intervene immediately, but tactfully, to prevent such behaviour from escalating. Encourage empathy and teach conflict resolution strategies to help create a safe and respectful environment for all participants.

EXAMPLE

If you notice one participant constantly interrupting or belittling others, have a private conversation with them to explain the impact of their behaviour and set clear expectations for respectful interactions.

8. Celebrate individual strengths and achievements: Recognize and celebrate individual achievements, talents, and strengths throughout the game experience. Provide positive feedback and encouragement, which can boost self-esteem and motivate participants to continue participating actively.

EXAMPLE

Acknowledge and highlight individual accomplishments during the game experience. For instance, recognize a participant who showed exceptional creativity in a group or commend someone who overcame a personal challenge during an activity.

9. Foster a supportive network: Create opportunities for participants to connect and build relationships beyond the game experience. If they don't know each other already, encourage them to exchange contact information, join online communities, or form study groups. This can help create a supportive network where they can continue to engage and learn from each other even after the game experience ends.

EXAMPLE

Create a „Join THE GAME" online group or forum where participants can connect and continue discussions, share resources, and support each other beyond the workshop's duration.

Remember, each participant is unique, and it's important to create an inclusive environment that celebrates diversity and individuality. By implementing these tips, you can create a game experience that engages all youngsters equally, encourages active participation, and fosters a friendly and supportive atmosphere.

IN ORDER TO ENSURE A SMOOTH GAME EXPERIENCE,
don't forget to prepare a gameplay schedule in order to manage time effectively and make sure to have enough help to run the game

Some useful passages from the safe space cheat sheet to take into account:
From 'participants' section of safe space cheat sheet:

- Do you know how to involve everyone in the discussion, including people who are afraid to speak up in front of a group?
- Do you use inclusive language
  (to reflect all genders, cultural
  and religious diversity, persons with disabilities, etc.)?
- Are you able to ensure equal
  space/time for the expression of different opinions in the group?
- Do you know how to manage
  difficult conversations/"unpopular opinions"?
- Prepare a draft of ground rules for creating a safe space before playing, confirm with the participants/come to a consensus at the beginning of the game session:
  1. Are the rules you have established clear, specific and understandable?
  2. Have you thought about how to enforce these rules?express your opinions honestly, even if it differs from others'
  3. Have you thought about how to set realistic expectations?
  4. Do you know how to maintain confidentiality and respect the privacy of participants?

GROUND RULES
EXAMPLES

- Only one person speaks at a time
- Respect the right of others to have a different opinion
- Acknowledge the views of others and present your own without imposing
  (e.g. „This view is widespread so I looked into it and found [counter argument]")
- Avoid engaging in stereotypes
- Zero tolerance for hate speech and bullying behavior (e.g. eye rolling, name-calling, ignoring)
- Encourage participants to justify their arguments
- Encourage participation of all participants

PREPARING A SUMMARY

of the experience

WHAT TO DO TO MAKE THE DISCUSSION INTERESTING AND ENGAGING?

1. Remember to be an active listener - have a conversation instead of simply asking questions and waiting for reply
2. Remember about safe space recommendations - participants won't feel comfortable enough to talk freely if they feel judged by you or other participants
3. Create rules for the discussion with the participants; you can use examples from the safe space cheat sheet
4. Avoid yes and no questions
5. Avoid judging answers - be open to all answers, there is no good or bad ones
6. Big group: prepare printed questions for them and let them work in small groups on the questions. Later each group can present the summary of their discussion

WHAT TO DO TO MAKE DISCUSSION REFLECTIVE FOR PARTICIPANTS?

Try to relate to their situations when leading the discussion - instead of asking generic questions maybe you can be more specific (eg. imagine what would happen if someone from the senior class from your school decided to be a mechanic - do you think it would be different for John and Jenna?)

PLAN B *Tips & Tricks*

IT'S RAINING AND WE ARE PLAYING OUTSIDE:
· prepare Plan B before the game - think about a place, where you can organise the game and move quickly in case of a bad weather

WE ARE A BIG GROUP:
· divide the players into smaller groups. Prepare more than one path of playing the game. Example: 24 players -> 6 groups; prepare 3 different paths using different colours of envelopes with tips; groups 1, 2, 3 start playing at the same time and groups 4, 5, 6 - 10 minutes later

WE ARE A SMALL GROUP:
· make sure you will not interfere too much with their answers, make sure they have space to not answer questions if they don't want to

THE GROUP IS NOT COOPERATING/GROUP MEMBERS ARE MAKING FUN OF EACH OTHER OR THE GAME:
· stop the game and ask them what they need/ what will help. You can start with: I see that you don't follow the steps and I am under the impression that you don't want to play, I'm confused. Can you tell me what's happening?

TASKS ARE BEING TAKEN FROM PLACES AND "GET LOST":
· note on the first page/cover - "do not take this"
· prepare extra set of tasks - in that way you will be able to quickly replace lost ones

PLAYERS CAN'T FIND TASKS:
· give the group contact number just in case or tell them where to find you / where to find tips

PLAYERS DO NOT TAKE PART IN DISCUSSION:
· invite them to write down answers (prepare something to write) individually or in pairs

SOMEONE IS DOMINATING IN DISCUSSION:
· create clear rules for the discussion - example: each person pass the totem and the one who has the totem has a room to speak
· stop the discussion with "I m sorry we are running out of time and I really want to hear other people's opinions"

PROMOTION

You can use our template to invite for the game or prepare an invitation using free programs like Canva.

Feel free to use videos and pictures designed for this project. They are freely available and specifically created to inspire participation in the game.