



DAY-BY-DAY REPORT

by participants

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Erasmus+



DAY 1

The Erasmus+ program "Game Zone" starts with 28 persons from different EU countries and a jolly bunch of facilitators gathering in a small French resort to work on: understanding, designing and implementing games in modern youth education.

After getting to know each other and discovering the agenda, the difference between non-formal & informal education and more, the future game changers were put to a test – how quickly and productively they will prove as a team, regardless of their personality, nationality, gender, age and background. The game of the day was called "Number Games". Sheets of paper with numbers from 1 to 77 were placed on the ground, the walls and even behind a wall. The challenge in front of them was to figure out how to cover them all with a body part (a foot, a hand, a nose, you name it) in a consecutive order. Different strategies were invented and immediately tested. And before long, the record was set. The chronometer was stopped at exactly 130.25 sec. In the following discussion everyone had the chance to tell others how they felt during the game, what was the moral of it and so on.

The night was still young when the players served meals and drinks, typical for their countries, on a block table. In a game format again, while chewing and sipping, they unnoticeably got rid of some prejudices, had fun, acquired knowledge... And it was not only the twilight that erased the dissimilarities between them that night.

The day before they took a long way from home to Vieux Boucau, but today some of them took the even longer one from the dinner table to bed. They chose a D-tour with multiple stays on the benches, the lake shore, under the tree and at the dorms' doorway. Here and there someone would say "I go to sleep now", but a couple of hours after they'd be still standing and chatting under the moon light.



DAY 2

The morning of day 2 started with the group playing a little social experiment in the form of a roleplay/simulation game. The game in question was "Ticket2Holiday", created a few years ago as an educational resource in another project similar to the one we are now.

First we entered our roles with the help of the facilitator, and became members of one of the 3 civilizations living in our new world: Grogans, Heplas or Mewies. Our objective: go to the different work stations and try to gather enough money in order to buy a ticket that would allow us to break the routine and relax in a paradise land. But it was not so simple...

By the end of the game the group discovered that by being put in someone else's shoes, even for gameplay purposes, you gain a completely different perspective on social interactions. What was realized is that sometimes we might unintentionally not noticed our bad behaviors resulting from being born into privileged parts of the society.

The second game of the day was "Barnga", a card game conducted in complete silence which taught us not only the importance of knowing the rules, but also the inherent value in being able to bend them in order to reach social consensus.

In a nutshell, this day was dedicated to experiencing in first person the impact of educational games, so after each's game due debriefing, we put on our facilitator's glasses and analyzed each game in detail. Its mechanics, rules, restrictions, and opened the path to discussions about game design...



DAY 3

Creation starts! It's the middle point of the training course, so it is time to form groups and start working on our own games! The plan for the day? Discover the social topic on which we will focus our games, have a short input about learning design and then finally split into groups and start the process.

After selecting our first and second choice topics, participants were divided into 6 groups which included a balanced amount of profiles between educators, gamers and "novices" (as in people ready to learn and explore everything from scratch). By the end of the morning and the input about learning design, we formed mixed groups working on the topics of Migration; Active Participation; Healthy Lifestyle; Environment; Social Exclusion and Intercultural Understanding.

Once in our groups, we structured the working process in several stages: 1) Setting the learning objectives; 2) Defining the gameplay of our game; 3) Creating the story and the trailer; 4) Writing the rules and instructions for facilitators. After each stage we had group check ups, and in the meantime project facilitators gave us good advice and offered their reflections and ideas, smoothing out the process of game creation.

Each working group had a different rhythm and pace, so in the evening we had a free "night shift" so those who felt like continuing work could do it.



DAY 4

Finally, the most relaxed day since the project started! ^^ As usual, the morning started with a warm-up with the "Evolution game". In the beginning, we need to move as ameba and as we were evolving we became fish, then frog, chicken and afterwards, monkey. In the end, you could become a superwoman or a superman. It was funny and helped us start the day full of laughter.

Then we met with our team and continued to work on our games during the rest of the morning. There were ups and downs during the game preparation, but the energy was pretty fine and cool. Then, in the afternoon, the moment some of us were expecting the whole week: OCEAN time! The free afternoon was the perfect time to recharge ourselves and get some new enlightenment and inspiration for our game.

After a few hours of sunshine and walks on the Bay of Biscay, we came back to our venue for dinner, and after this we had a French evening, which was very funny. The first game was to answer questions about France. How you can win? Be the first one who will grab the cup that was placed in the center of the circle. The second one was to guess one word in French that we have been using during the game. When we guessed the right letter, the whole group won and when we got the wrong one, we were "hanging ourselves".

Finally, we closed the evening singing French songs Karaoke mode, but since we don't know the French (the majority of us) it was really funny and cool, and completely chaotic! ^^



DAY 5

Waking up on the chirping unlike that of the Old World sparrows, but rather on that of a pack of Erasmus+ people having breakfast. Today might as well be the biggest day of them all. The planets are aligned, the lunar eclipse shows its first polite red spots and the war drums are ready to wake up our gaming souls. Some are still recovering from the soapy candle-lit bloodbath that was the 'French Night', nevertheless they all showed resilience for today's menu.

We were all allocated some extra time to sew the last holes in our sails. Today everything was about testing, testing, and testing: mechanics, dynamics, Hispanic graphics, debriefing critics, selfish tactics, random classics, spiritual gymnastics, Germanic semantics, 'titanic-like panics', excited 'manics'... you name it!

The sweat of those long-lost forlorn days transcended into this hexagon of topical games: Environment, Social exclusion, Migration, Active participation, Intercultural communication, and Healthy lifestyle. All went well. Little changes had to be made. However, some polishing and cranking up were already anticipated. All were prepared for the worst and survived with no scratch. All deserved that gilded medal. It is a weird sight to see, 20-ish stars rising up to the clear azure firmament. Luminous little balls of glory. Evening came, night followed. Beach Olympics and dancing spastics ended by sad police antics – that was the fifth day.



DAY 6

The final day! After days of hard work, came the time to close and evaluate our experiences and look towards the future uses of the valuable knowledge we gained during the course of the project.

During the morning we had time to come back to our working groups and give the last touches to our games. First step was to revise the received feedback from the test the day before and discuss possible changes and improvements for our games, and then it was the time to make sure everything was well documented in the Game Outline: from clear instructions to facilitators and participants, so proper debriefing questions, list of needed materials and additional resources.

After lunch: space for evaluation. We talked about our experience in the group work through Dixit cards, identified our top 8 learning outcomes of the week, and even managed to take a little trip on the project time machine... Then we were ready to assess the impact of the training course and receive our Youthpasses together with memorable quotes and takeouts.

We leave Vieux Boucau behind, but the skills, memories and connections we have forged here, we will take with us to treasure forever.