

IDEC PBL Project

“Change the game, not Africa”



From Pilots to Practice – What We’ve Learned So Far...

From Lyon with Practice – The French Pilot Experience
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Studying international development cooperation with project-based learning

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Context of the French Experimentation

Experimentation of the serious game has been conducted with **two groups of Bachelor students** in Business & Management degree, during an HRM module

- Date and time of the two testing: testing have been conducted on 28th February and 14th March 2025
- Number of participants: 13 + 16 students
- Date and time of the focus group interviews: **interviews have been conducted via Zoom** on 22nd April, by a pre-PhD student, starting at 5.00pm.
- Number of participants: **5 students**, first names have been changed, 3 females, 2 males, bachelor students in international business: **Sophie, 20 years old, Thomas, 21 years old, Chloé, 19 years old, Amélie, 20 years old & Lucas, 22 years old**



Overall trends across focus group interviews - Analysis

1. **Evolution in thinking:** All participants show **significant shifts** in thinking across questions, particularly after playing the game.
2. **Academic-personal integration:** Participants consistently connect **academic concepts** with personal experiences and values.
3. **Agency and partnership:** Strong consensus emerges around the **importance of local agency, partnership** approaches, and questioning **power dynamics**.
4. **Systemic perspective:** All increasingly recognize connections between individual actions, organizational practices, and broader **systemic** issues.
5. **Critical self-awareness:** Most notable shift is participants' **growing awareness** of their own assumptions and biases regarding development.

Trend 1: Evolution in Thinking

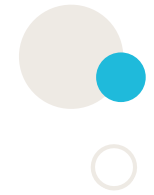
Key insight: Significant shifts in development perspectives, both over time and after game exposure

Evidence

- Transition from simplistic to nuanced understanding of development relationships
- Movement from deficit-focused to strength-based perspectives
- Evolution from technical to systemic approaches to challenges

Illustrative quotes

- Lucas: *"I used to believe inequality was simply the natural result of different abilities and efforts. My internship experience changed my perspective."*
- Sophie: *"Before playing the game, I viewed international organizations somewhat uncritically as essential actors in development."*
- Thomas: *"What changed for me was recognizing that the issue isn't just effectiveness but legitimacy."*





Trend 2: Academic-Personal Integration

Key insight: Consistent connection between theoretical concepts and lived experiences

Evidence

- References to course content applied to real-world situations
- Personal experiences informing interpretation of academic concepts
- Practical application of theoretical frameworks to decision-making

Illustrative quotes

- Amélie: *"Coming from a Senegalese background, this question is personal for me... My family experienced both helpful and harmful international initiatives."*
- Sophie: *"My management studies have shown me that individual actions ultimately drive organizational behavior."*
- Chloé: *"In our business ethics seminar, we discussed how the post-WWII period saw much lower inequality in Western countries through intentional policies."*

Trend 3: Agency and Partnership

Key insight: Strong consensus on the centrality of local agency and partnership approaches

Evidence

- Acknowledgment of unconscious assumptions despite good intentions
- Recognition of contradiction between stated beliefs and unconscious positioning
- Understanding how Western-centric frameworks shape perspectives

Illustrative quotes

- Amélie: *"What's powerful about the game is how it shifts the focus from 'fixing Africa' to examining the assumptions and practices of development actors themselves."*
- Lucas: *"The most successful projects were those designed with rather than for local communities."*
- Chloé: *"Many 'development failures' stem from ignoring local knowledge and agency rather than lack of resources or technology."*

Trend 4: Systemic Perspective

Key insight: Increasing recognition of interconnections between individual actions and systemic issues

Evidence

- Movement from isolated to holistic understanding of challenges
- Recognition of how local issues connect to global structures
- Attention to unintended consequences of interventions

Illustrative quotes

- Amélie: *"What frustrates me is how people separate 'personal actions' from 'systemic change' as if they're unrelated. The system is made of individuals!"*
- Thomas: *"Agricultural productivity isn't just about technology but connects to land rights, market access, and international trade policies."*
- Lucas: *"Solutions that seem technically sound often fail because they don't address underlying power dynamics or historical contexts."*



Trend 5: Critical Self-Awareness

Key insight: Growing recognition of personal biases and assumptions about development

Evidence

- References to course content applied to real-world situations
- Personal experiences informing interpretation of academic concepts
- Practical application of theoretical frameworks to decision-making

Illustrative quotes

- Sophie: *"The game revealed my unconscious tendency to frame challenges in terms of what African communities lack rather than the strengths and expertise they possess."*
- Chloé: *"Despite intellectually believing in the importance of local leadership, I realized I still subconsciously positioned myself as a potential 'helper' rather than a partner or ally."*
- Thomas: *"I hadn't fully appreciated how rarely external actors invest in understanding local contexts before designing solutions."*



Conclusion & Suggestions



evolution in thinking appears particularly profound in challenging previously unexamined assumptions about development relationships, moving from simplistic helper/helped dynamics toward more nuanced understandings of partnership, agency, and systemic barriers



integration suggests that effective education about development issues must engage both intellectual understanding and personal values to create meaningful change in perspectives and actions.



recognition of the centrality of agency and partnership represents perhaps the most significant and consistent outcome of the game experience across all participants.



systemic perspective allows participants to see beyond isolated issues toward the complex interconnections that shape development outcomes, leading to more sophisticated engagement strategies.



self-awareness appears to be a prerequisite for genuine change in approach, allowing participants to recognize and address the unconscious biases that might otherwise undermine their intentions to engage ethically in development work



Conclusion & Suggestions

Faculty and Staff Discussion on the Business Game experimentation "Change the Game, Not Africa" as an Educational Experience revealed strong consensus about the game's educational value while highlighting departmental perspectives on integration.



The group concluded by recommending:

1. expanding the game implementation across management disciplines with potential subject-specific extensions,
2. developing assessment metrics to quantify learning outcomes, and,
3. creating faculty development workshops to help instructors facilitate the complex discussions the game generates around privilege, agency, and systemic change in management education.



Student Key words to describe their gaming experience





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