

Once Upon a Simulation – Crafting the Story Behind the Game



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Content of presentation

- Crafting a story line in general – our first steps
- Creating our NGO story line
- Creating a donor agency story line
- **Main goal of presentation: give audience an idea of how to create a story line**



Creating a serious game. But what is it exactly?

Research concept

Research the
situations serious
games are used in

Trial: tried many
games





What was our main goal?

- To create game that can be used both inside of classrooms and at home
- Game had to be informative and enjoyable at the same time
- Had to include real-life problems: based on our experiences and real-life cases
- Learning outcomes had to be measurable

2 main challenges: technical



'Detailed but not too complicated'



Questions → Answers → Consequences

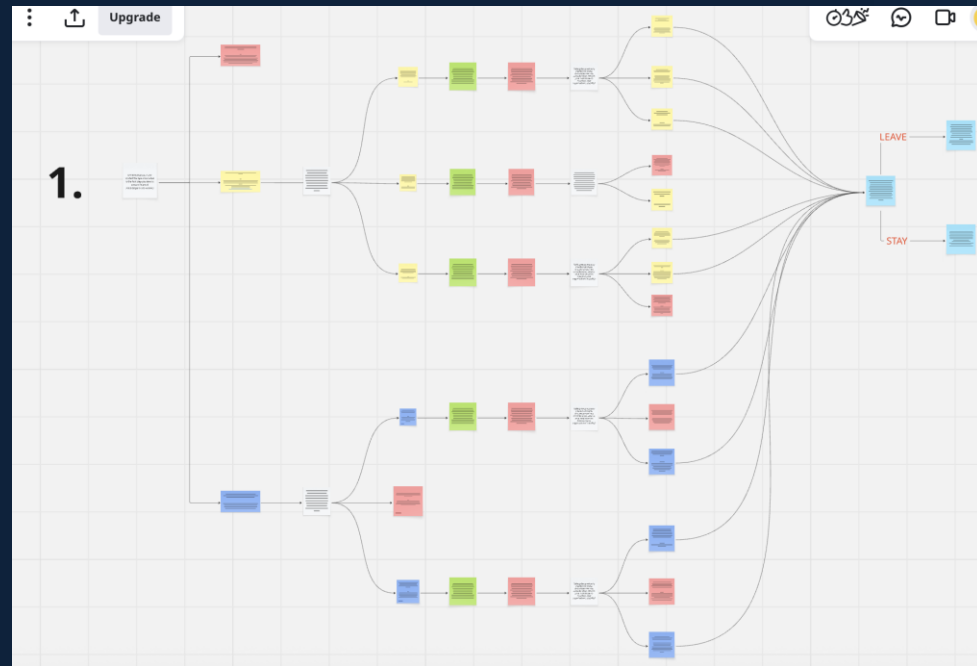
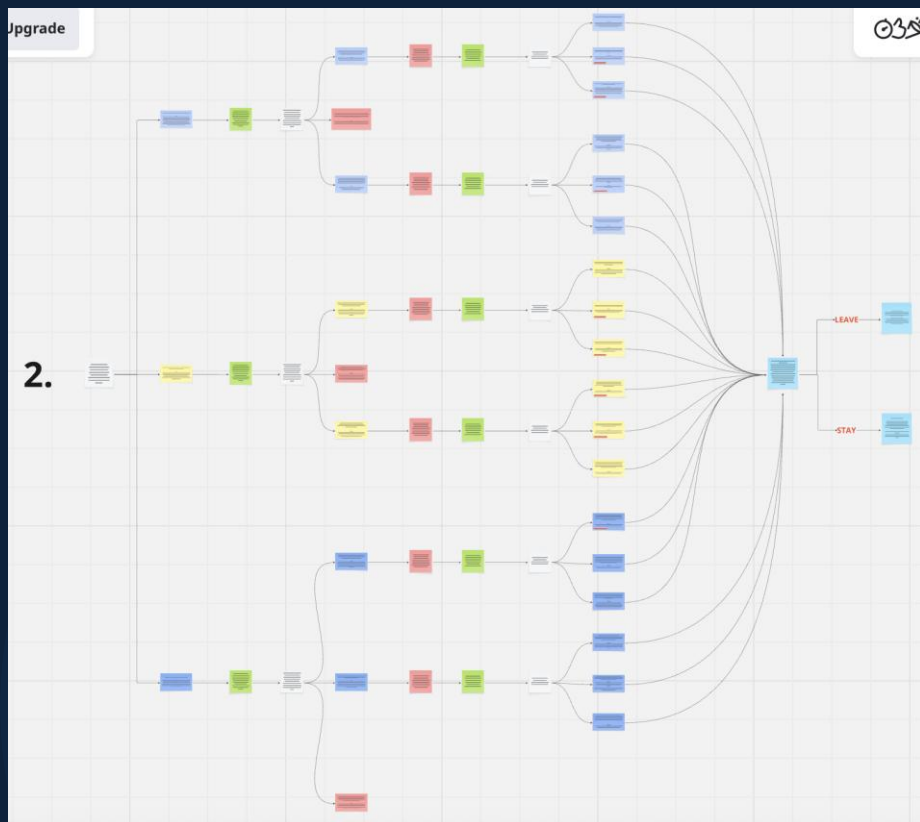


Tree-shaped story lines



Scoring system: How to make learning outcomes measurable?





Tree-shaped story lines

- Complete script of two existing story lines:
- 3 sets of questions
- Cca. 30 answers with consequences altogether

2 main challenges: content



Drawing a clear context:
identifying exact
location and actors



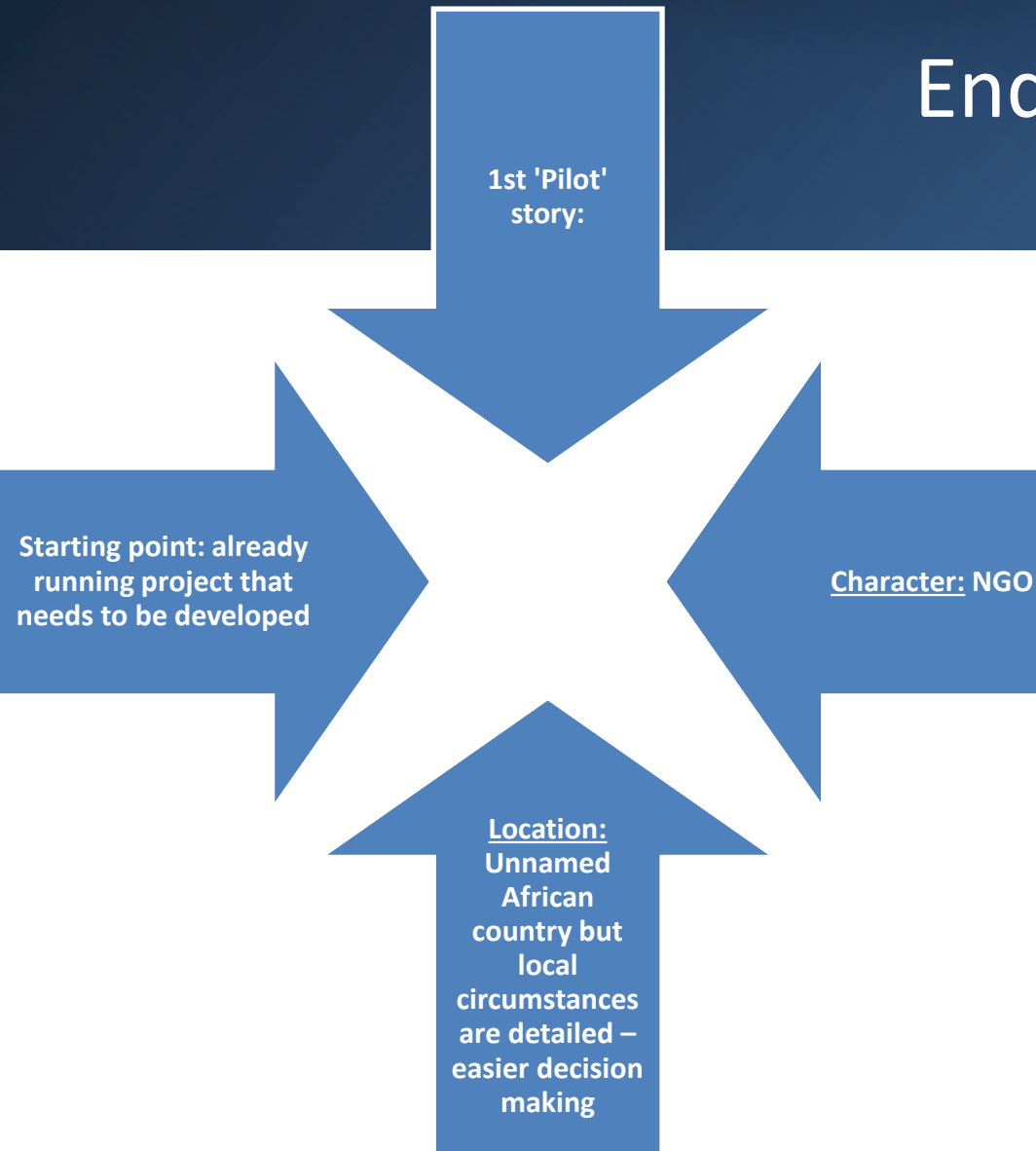
Think of many scenarios
that had to be realistic



Realistic twists to the
game to make it fun:
eg. natural disasters



End result: 1st story



Main goals:

- Choose a source of income for your projects;
- Different types of sources will determine the missions you can do;
- Main focus missions: education, sanitation and hygiene, healthcare;
- Natural disaster: alter story based on previous choices;
- In the end: success or failure but player gets to choose to stay or leave.



Question 1: Year 3

Taking these circumstances into consideration, what is your next move to maintain your organisation's stability?

O1. You launch a marketing campaign. Make a communication/marketing plan!

O2. You request instant humanitarian aid to fix damages from your National Development Agency

O3. Set up an agreement to cooperate with other NGO

NGO design



Congratulations, you completed this game in this role! Your decisions had economic, social or environmental consequences (either gains, or pains). The higher your score in a field is, the stronger impact your decision made on that field. However, it is not worth comparing the scores on different fields, and it cannot be the aim to be an economic, social or environmental champion. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals also include economic, social and environmental goals, and none of them is more important than the others - activities affect most of them at the same time in an interdependent way. Hence, as we stated in the beginning of the game, there are no good or bad answers, just certain consequences that impose a different impact on each dimension, which is an interesting learning outcome in itself. We encourage you to play another role, too, or try your hand at this role again - in the next game, you can make economic-, society- or environment-focused decisions, and you will see how the scores change. Please visit the Knowledge base on our website (www.idec-pbl.eu) to learn more about your role with the support of recommended readings

- [Michael Brophy - The Role of NGOs in Supporting Education in Africa \(2020\)](#)
- [Nicola Banks, David Hulme - The Role of NGOs and Civil Society in Development and Poverty Reduction \(2012\)](#)

Ending the story

- In the end of the story: players can read a short paragraph about the progress made during the game
- Players are encouraged to read further about NGO's role in African development

2nd story: national donor

Model national donor agency's behaviour

Different approach: deciding about projects with existing financial means

Decisions align with national interests and politics

Strategical decision making and cooperation with other agencies



National donor story

- **Choosing flagship projects: agriculture, healthcare, education – similar to other story line**
- **Finance based on local politics: no diverse sources available – tried to show good and bad sides of this**
- **Choosing agencies to cooperate with and others to ignore**
- **Goal of this story line: keep independence, build strong alliances and most importantly help locals**

End of donor story

- **Decide to leave or stay: both are good answers**



- **Players get a summarizing paragraph based on their last decision**

Concluding thoughts

- Crafting one story line takes approximately 20-25 hours of work
- Be well aware of player needs and balance educational and enjoyment factors
- Research, research, research
- I hope you enjoy the game!



IDEC-PBL - Change the game, not Africa!

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Thank you for your attention!

