



IDEC PBL

Change the game, not Africa!

Project newsletter #5

May 2025

SERIOUS GAME

We're thrilled to share that our serious game is finally ready!

This project has been a true labor of love, with countless hours of work poured in by all our amazing partners.

We hope you'll enjoy playing it as much as we enjoyed creating it – and that it brings value, insight, and maybe even a bit of fun along the way.

Thanks for being part of this journey – we can't wait to hear what you think!

Try out the game, here is the link - free access!



THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GAME IN COURSES

As part of the development process, the serious game was tested in real course settings across all partner institutions. Each partner integrated the game into one of their courses and collected valuable feedback from students.

To gain deeper insights into the user experience, each partner also conducted a short interview with one student who had played the game. This gave us a more personal perspective on how the game was received and what impact it had on learners.

What did you learn from the game? How did it help you understand the topic better?

SZTE

The game taught me a lot about international development and relationships through real-life scenarios. I learned how issues like poverty, lack of education, and limited access to healthcare all interconnected. It also showed how international organizations and NGOs can support local communities and improve living conditions in not only African countries but also all around the world. The interactive choices helped me see the impact and different strategies to aid communities. Overall, it gave me a clearer picture of how development actually works on the ground. What stood out most to me was how closely the game's content related to the Democratic Republic of Congo, my home country. I understood more deeply the challenges people face and how outside support could help. As someone who dreams of becoming a politician, this experience inspired me to think about how I could bring change. It made me realize the importance of working with NGOs and using political leadership to help people in need. The game gave me hope and motivation to take real steps toward helping my country.

FFA

Understanding the consequences of your actions and recognizing that different actors can have completely different goals and interests in a given situation is essential. Development cooperation is not a widely known topic, and the Hungarian education system places little emphasis on it. It was touched upon, but never as a central theme. I would be very interested in working with international relations in the future, and I would also be happy to work with development cooperation.

STUCOM

I learned more about the topic and the challenges related to it, it highlights the impacts that a single choice can have. Sometimes it gets tricky to make choices as you don't really know the effects your answer will have. It is highly educational.

IAELYON

Coming from a family with Senegalese roots, I already had some personal understanding of development issues, but the game provided a crucial systemic perspective I was missing. What struck me most was seeing how power dynamics play out in seemingly neutral development processes. I learned that even well-intentioned initiatives frequently undermine local systems when they prioritize donor requirements over community needs.

The game helped me connect my personal experiences with broader patterns – things my relatives had described anecdotally suddenly made sense within larger structural contexts. I gained a much deeper understanding of how funding mechanisms, reporting requirements, and project timelines often force communities to abandon their own priorities to secure resources. This wasn't just abstract knowledge – it was illuminating to see how these dynamics reproduce colonial relationships despite the language of partnership and empowerment. The game gave me concrete examples and vocabulary to articulate frustrations I'd sensed but couldn't previously name.

How motivating did you find the game?

SZTE

I found the game very motivating because it made me feel like my choices could lead to real impact. It showed that even small decisions can help solve big problems, especially in areas like education, healthcare, tech development and climate change. Seeing the challenges and possibilities in African countries, including the DRC, inspired me to want to get more involved with NGOs. It gave me a sense of purpose and encouraged me to think seriously about how I can contribute to positive change in the future.

FFA

To be honest, at first I didn't find the game particularly engaging, but after some time as I have tried the different actors I started to appreciate it more. The topic is very important and the execution is entertaining —it just feels like it still needs some refinement. That said, the game is definitely suitable for grabbing someone's attention and motivating them to get involved in these kinds of initiatives.

STUCOM

It gets more motivating as you go through the different games. The first one is more about discovering everything and with the others I got much more aware of the consequences my choices could have and tried to do my best as to achieve the goal as best as I could.

IAELYON

I found the game deeply motivating, but in a way that redirected rather than simply amplified my existing commitment. Before playing, I was already involved with diaspora-led initiatives, but the game motivated me to become more vocal about challenging problematic narratives and power structures in development work.

What I found particularly motivating was seeing concrete examples of how development approaches could be reconfigured to genuinely center local agency. It wasn't just critiquing problems but showing alternative possibilities. This gave me hope and practical direction for my advocacy work on campus. The game motivated me to focus more explicitly on how our business school approaches international development in the curriculum and to support more policy advocacy around trade and economic justice. Rather than making me feel helpless about systemic problems, it clarified where leverage points exist for creating meaningful change, which I found incredibly energizing.

Why do you think gamification \ serious games are useful in classes?

SZTE

Gamification and serious games are useful in classes because they make learning more engaging and interactive. Instead of just reading or listening, students actively participate, which helps them understand complex topics more deeply. Games can simplify real-world issues and show the consequences of different choices, making learning feel more practical and meaningful. They also encourage critical thinking, problem-solving, and empathy. Overall, serious games turn passive learning into an active and memorable experience.

FFA

Because for modern generations video games and the overall experience of interactive gaming is important. In today's world, video games are a valuable tool for education and serve as a relevant teaching platform, they just need to be used appropriately. When used thoughtfully, they can effectively engage learners, spark curiosity, and support the development of various skills.


STUCOM

I think that gamification and serious games can be very useful in classes especially on important subjects such as these ones because when teachers deliver a speech to students, they tend to lack focus; whereas through serious games, students are engaged in the activity. Each of their choices has an impact, they are "actors", they learn by themselves. I am convinced that through this method students learn more things and better.

IAELYON


Serious games like this one are particularly valuable in business education because they engage us emotionally with issues we might otherwise approach only intellectually. In traditional lectures, it's easy to maintain distance from the human implications of economic theories and business models. This game forced us to confront the real-world consequences of development approaches in a way that reading case studies never could.

The interactive nature makes abstract power dynamics tangible and immediate. You experience the frustration of having external priorities imposed rather than just reading about it.



This creates the kind of deep learning that actually changes behavior. I've noticed that when my classmates discuss development issues now, even those who were previously uncritical of traditional models reference experiences from the game.

For students like me with personal connections to development contexts, these games also create space for our perspectives to be recognized as valuable knowledge. The simulation validated experiences that are often marginalized in academic settings. For students without such connections, it provides a glimpse into realities they might otherwise never encounter, challenging assumptions in ways that traditional pedagogy rarely achieves.



WORKSHOPS BUILT AROUND THE GAME

SZTE

Between April 7 and 11, as part of the International Week organized by the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration at the University of Szeged, our IDEC PBL project was presented in the form of a workshop titled Serious Game in Practice.

The event began with a brief introduction to the concept of serious games, followed by the presentation of our project's own development, the Change the Game, not Africa game. After the introduction, a roundtable discussion was held, moderated by our project leader, Beáta Udvari.



Three experts with extensive experiences in the use of serious games shared their insights on the opportunities and challenges of applying such games in educational contexts. They also discussed the experiences they had with our own developed game and how they integrated it into their courses during the testing phase. The workshop provided a valuable opportunity for knowledge sharing and the exchange of good practices in the field of game-based learning.



STUCOM

Between 21 and 25 April 2025, Stucum Barcelona hosted a workshop organized by Rosario Cuart and Alex Castels, leaders of the IDEC PBL project. The purpose of the event was to promote and provide hands-on practice with the IDEC serious game, a tool designed to enhance learning and teaching practices within partner organizations.

Throughout the workshop, participants engaged in active learning exercises centered around the principles of project-based learning (PBL). The IDEC serious game was used as a core element to demonstrate how international development cooperation topics can be taught more effectively through innovative, student-centered approaches.



Furthermore, the workshop contributed to the advancement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), with a particular focus on target SDG 4.7, which emphasizes global education and the promotion of sustainable development through education.



FFA

As the IDEC-PBL project is finally approaching the finish line, Marton Balogh, the assigned coordinator on behalf of Foundation for Africa, held a workshop both for the internal and external colleagues of the NGO. The workshop started with a thorough summary of the project, from the very first ideas to the last steps of creating the game. Participants of the workshop had the opportunity to gain insight into the concept of serious games and where they are used. After the generic framework, Marton Balogh has introduced the actual game, presented snapshots and clips taken from the gameplay, explained the scoring system and evaluation forms. He also stressed the main goal of the project and how the game was meant to support that idea.



Following the presentation, participants were asked to try the game in small groups and present their findings to their peers. Generally, colleagues of Foundation for Africa really enjoyed the experience of playing with the game. According to their feedback the atmosphere of the game was great, the content was superb and they also enjoyed the visual elements a lot. However, they have mentioned a number of flaws, which implies that the game still has room for improvement. These comments were gathered and drafted in a document which were shared with the project partners as well.

IAELYON

During the workshop, faculty and staff engaged in a discussion about the educational use of the business simulation game "Change the Game, Not Africa." Participants reached a strong consensus on the game's pedagogical value, while also sharing diverse departmental perspectives on how it could be integrated into their respective curricula.

The discussion concluded with three main recommendations:

- (1) expanding the game's implementation across various management disciplines, potentially with subject-specific adaptations;
- (2) developing assessment tools to quantify learning outcomes; and
- (3) organizing faculty development workshops to support instructors in facilitating complex conversations around privilege, agency, and systemic change in management education.



CLOSING EVENT

The closing conference of our project was held in Szeged, Hungary, bringing together educators, NGO professionals, and game developers from across Europe. The event marked the conclusion of a two-year Erasmus+ partnership focused on developing an educational serious game that introduces students to the complexities of international development cooperation through project-based learning.



Participants shared insights from piloting the game in classrooms, with educators reporting strong student engagement and critical thinking outcomes. The development team offered a behind-the-scenes look at the game's design, emphasizing authenticity and educational value.

Interactive sessions included a roundtable on engaging youth in global issues, with international contributions highlighting diverse approaches from France, Ireland, and Hungary. The event concluded with a shared interest in continuing the use of immersive tools in education for global citizenship.



THE HANDBOOK AND GUIDEBOOK ARE READY

Handbook

Through this practical handbook we hope to give you useful tips and guidelines not to forget anything on the way and to build a serious game that has been well designed but also well thought with clear objectives and learning outcomes.



Guidebook

Our game aims to enhance education quality through project-based learning and serves as a supplementary tool for courses, classes, or workshops, while instructors facilitate a deeper understanding of the topics covered. This guidebook provides guidance on how to integrate the game into educational settings, offering practical insights for educators to maximize its impact.

PODCAST SUMMARY

As part of the IDEC project, a series of engaging podcast episodes have been produced and are freely available to anyone interested in exploring the world of educational serious games. These episodes feature insightful discussions with educators, game designers, and researchers who share their experiences, best practices, and challenges in integrating serious games into educational contexts. Whether you're a teacher looking for innovative classroom tools, a developer interested in designing for impact, or a policymaker seeking fresh perspectives on digital learning, the IDEC podcast offers valuable, real-world insights that bridge theory and practice in playful learning environments. You can listen to all episodes on the [**IDEC website**](#).

CLOSING REMARKS

As the IDEC project draws to a close, we reflect with deep gratitude and pride on the journey we have shared. This collaborative endeavor has not only advanced the understanding and development of serious games but has also brought together a passionate community dedicated to transforming learning through play. We hope that the insights, tools, and connections forged throughout the project will continue to inspire educators, researchers, and developers long after its conclusion. Though this chapter ends, the spirit of innovation and commitment to empowering learners through meaningful, engaging experiences lives on, carrying forward the hope that education can be both impactful and joyful for all.





INTERESTED IN MORE?

If you are interested in the **IDEC PBL project**, join us, do not hesitate to visit our website, where you can find more information:

CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION



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*College Othniel, Kinshasa,
DR Congo Students at the College Othniel School which founded by the Foundation For Africa
Photo: Foundation For Africa*



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