INGAME – Gaming for Social Inclusion and Civic Participation – A holistic approach for a cultural shift in education and policy

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

NEWSLETTER No6

NEWSLETTER CONTENT

GAME DEVELOPED

https://dcnet.eu/ingame/202208/

THE GAME IS READY!

The game we developed is a 'coming of age journey' of a (humanoid) youngster from a remote civilisation from outer space who lands on Earth and has to learn about our planet, its inhabitants and their ways. The avatar (the player) is supported and nudged by a 'mentor' (NPC), challenged and questioned by 'others' (NPC), and facilitated through information (NPC). Through six levels, they grow up to become a young adult. They become more and more aware of human (inter)actions, what works in society and what does not, and what the consequences of all that are for the planet. In total, 6 levels are used in the game.

Level 1 - the avatar (player) has to find out / learn about (the difference between) sex and gender (gender identity, gender equality, gender norms, gender roles, gender discrimination, etc.). They will encounter their first humans and their stories of experience. There are three (overlapping) issues within this level: 1. Gender and sex, 2. gender identity and gender roles; gender (in) equality, and 3. gender norms and exclusion (discrimination).
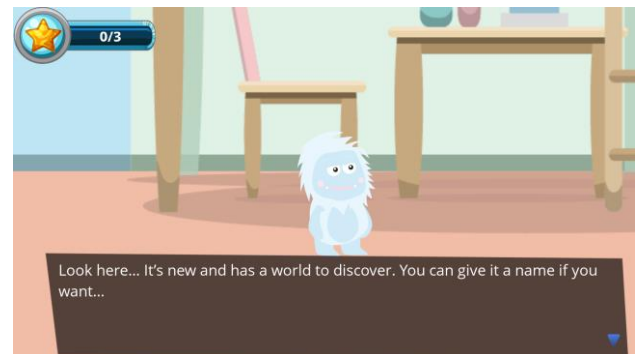
Level 2 – education (equality and equity). Education (at home and in school) plays an important role in knowledge (of the world) and development of the 'self' (i.e. identity, self-esteem), but also an individual's background (i.e. socio-economic, cultural). We also have to understand that 'equal chances' are not as equal as we think. It goes for society in general, but specifically for education. The player has to find out / learn about (the difference between) 'equality' and 'equity', how cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, political and social trends and discourses (and prejudices) shape the whole education process and the self-perception up to finding a place in society and the job market. The player should develop empathy (with other (young) learners) and an increased understanding of the right to a good education for everyone.

Level 3 – social inclusion. We want the player to become aware that social exclusion (including stigmatisation, stereotyping, discrimination, racism) can happen in different spaces: in the labour market, in the participation in communities, in public policy and (service) institutions, in legal norms and rights, in informal (community) norms and practices, and in (basic) human capabilities in dealing with 'others'. The player will experience a moment of exclusion and will have to find out and learn how to turn that around towards (social) inclusion by either choosing solutions that promote that and/or finding out 'the hard way' how we sometimes fail in offering support. In the end, an increased sense of 'equity' and justice, but also empathy and compassion for others, will lead to successful inclusion.

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Level 4 – city life. We want the player to become aware of policies and visions (or no vision) of governments and municipalities when it comes to city development now and in the (far) future.

Create awareness of (possible) neighbourhood / citizens' initiatives that promote cohesion and sustainability, and the potential resourcefulness of mixed, diverse neighbourhoods. But also awareness of discrimination (e.g. migrant neighbourhoods) and the people who live there. Awareness of 'renovation' of old neighbourhoods (often low income) that favours 'gentrification' and disadvantages lower income households. Finally, a glimpse of the cities of the future: greener, more social, self-sufficient and sustainable.

Level 5 – environment/climate change. We want the player to become aware of a number of issues around the environment, both urban and global, and that – in a way – they go hand in hand. Water pollution (urban, agriculture, industry), and its consequences for hygiene and health (humans, plants, animals) and ocean life. Air pollution (urban, agriculture, industry, transport, etc.) and its consequences on the atmosphere (carbon dioxide and other 'greenhouse' gas emissions) and thus global warming.

Level 6 – (solving) global issues and crises – civic engagement and civic participation. The player is now aware of the most important social and environmental issues and has already shown that they (and others) can come up with solutions on a local and regional level. Now it is a matter of gaining a little more knowledge in order to face global issues and to actively (and collectively) tackle any abuses. In this last level, the player will become aware of possible actions as a participating and responsible citizen.

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