

Market Busters

Engaging NEET Youth
THROUGH THE
MEDIUM OF GAMES



The project's and the game's background:

- The project is aimed at developing human capital among NEET generation through games which are oriented around social and professional activation in the target youth group (including the area of economics and enterprise). A special attention was paid to the 15-17-year olds who are educationally excluded and as a result have future development severely limited.
- The project pinpoints the need of introducing games to educational curricula. By complementing institutional education, they will also reinforce students' key competences. At the same time, games promote life-long education and give visible, positive results almost immediately which is of outer importance among the NEET youth.
- The project aims at working on the game which will constitute a new non-formal, educational tool addressed to educators, youth workers and facilitators working with socially excluded, marginalised, having smaller chances of achieving success NEET youth aged 15-17.
- The project partnership enabled parties to discuss the topic of education in the many-sided context of enterprise (including the game creation). Which was possible thanks to the active engagement of specialists, practitioners, and multicultural youth.

Games enable addressing diverse topics/problems (challenges) such as:

- Learning through exploration / active learning – in the context which is close to NEET youth. Which results in creation of stimulating learning, exploration and thoughtful conditions (appropriate and flexible surrounding for true engagement and interactive play). In this aspect games may encourage to learn those who have had negative experiences and bad memories (Stewart et al, 2013).
- Intuitive understanding – being based on inspiration as a tool for broadening knowledge and skills (Ruben, 1999).

The use of games as an educational tool, according to project's aims, enables to:

- reinforce social interaction and key competences, understand cause-effect chain of one's own actions, solve problems, react quickly, feel instrumental and autonomous, be creative, develop language skills (Content and Language Integrated Learning),
 - practice (directly or indirectly) entrepreneurial elements: turnover, market needs from the perspective of starting one's own business, occupations' characteristics, employer-employee relations, real value of the money, the notion of economics, creating entrepreneurial spirit.
- It is worth perceiving games as a reinforcement tool but at the same time they cannot be treated as a purely exclusive or unassisted aid. They need to constitute an

inseparable part of the whole process aimed at shaping desirable demeanour. Remembering about the importance of the process background including family situation, way of being upbrought, life experience, motivation, personal characteristics etc.

Games have the impact on reinforcing attendees' competences:

- Games constitute the inseparable element of youth culture which may easily be transferred to increasing NEET engagement with training and education, including developing knowledge, skills and demeanour (NESTA, 2013). Together with the increasing interest and need of using games in education, the need for creating educational games together with their methodology is getting more and more necessary.
- Games are not only mere fun or just a free time activity. Using them in both non-formal and formal education may help achieving positive results, especially in the area of emotional and intellectual development.
- Encouraging NEET to improve their self-awareness as well as engaging them into new activities may result in more effective learning, building positive social attitude, and developing greater entrepreneurial spirit. This will also enable youth to search for finding and satisfying their own aspirations.

The establishments of game creation process:

- It has been assumed that the game needs to be address to particular group and at the same time created by this group in order to get a comprehensive and adequate final product. That is why the game has been created with the variety of attendees – educators, youth workers, facilitators who work with NEET aged 15-17 on the daily basis; including partners, parents, the elderly, key educational institutions' members, entrepreneurs.
- Overworking the concept and testing the model and its prototypes were taking place mostly during international project's mobilities 11-14.02, 4-7.04, 8-11.05, at Poznan University of Business and Economics 8.05, 12.05, 10.06 and in Jan Amos Komeński Complex of Schools of Economics in Leszno 14.06.
- Design Thinking methodology was used for identifying educators' needs in the area of supporting NEET youth and later on for pinpointing desired elements and characteristics of the game.

NEET youth background and surrounding and their personal characteristics – as it was discovered in the process of creating and testing the concept of the game – determine

individual, dedicated approach towards the game. The approach which supports social and entrepreneurial attitude. The following characteristics are of outer importance:

- The general experiences among youth and between youth and educators as well as work experience of educators. As the attendees have shown lack of experience with complex board games there is a need for:
 - limiting advanced, complicated games (the emphasis is put on using play and having fun while introducing new elements),
 - using quick and simple games that do not need too much time dedicated for explaining their rules.
- As a consequence, it is worth considering diverse games, from mini-games (based on simple structure, used for enhancing motivation, serving as only the introduction to the topics) to complex games (more advanced, with the need to spend quite some time on playing, and also of stimulating characteristics) (Prensky, 2005). What is worth noticing, the already existing aids and instructions may be very helpful. For instance poker cards (a pair, two pairs, etc).
- The emphasis should be put on a balance of the game remembering that its rules mirror (have the analogy) real life situations. Moreover, being aware that:
 - The simulation which mirrors real life situations (detailed characteristics of business leading) may make the rules of the game too complicated resulting in negative/affective filter for general understanding and accepting the game,
 - oversimplification of games' rules may happen to be very unrealistic (too far away from real life situations; even encompassing their contradiction "travesty"),
- The game may complement the educational process, meaning that the pre (introduction and explanation) while and post educational stages (development of the topic) are needed. The game itself is not an exclusive element in the sense that it cannot substitute the person acting but with the help of trainer/ educator/ facilitator can help paying attention to chosen topics/themes. Considering the above statements, the successful youth game will be the one having the following characteristics:
 - Clear structure with the simple rules - so the one which may easily be understood and is well contextualised (refers to practical matters, not to abstract, unrealistic concepts),
 - Visual and metaphorical references for entrepreneurial, economics, and business themes,
 - Non-violent, friendly, enabling players to communicate with each other,
 - Enabling the player reflecting one's own feelings and emotions and as a result reinforcing personal development, self-esteem and skills of maintaining self-acts.

The variety of games currently available on the market may serve as an inspiration for creating the game. There are a few examples of such games that are worth mentioning due to their simple, clear and realistic rules, and reasonable price. Among those we may enumerate for instance:

- WWEST Women in Science and Engineering (<http://phylogame.org/decks/wwest-women-in-science-and-engineering-deck>), aiming at collecting the specific cards depicting particular characteristics and skills of women in science and engineering,
- Jaipur (<https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/54043/jaipur>), where a player collects resource cards and earn money on their selling,
- Ticket to ride (<https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/9209/ticket-ride>), aimed at getting rail routes through filling them with one's own rolling stock of particular colour.
- Other games, especially the ones listed in report IO2 attached to the project.

The instructions created in the process of creating and testing the games during this project:

MARKET BUSTERS – VERSION 1

(a simplified game, based on traditional cards)

What is the game about?

Players collect order cards (on the basis of resource cards) according to customers' needs (customers' needs are present on the order cards laying on the table).

They need to act fast as only 12 orders will be brought to the market.

Who wins?

The winner is the player who has created the most orders (in case the number of orders is equal – the sales profit matters).

What and how to prepare?

- There are 2 traditional packs of cards needed (2-10, J, Q, K, A, Joker) amongst which one needs to prepare the following cards: 2 sets of cards 2-10, A (they will act as resources. Be aware that Ace means 1) and 1 set of cards J, Q, K (they will act as orders. Be aware that J is 11, Q - 12, K - 13. Additional option – it is possible to add a few order cards from the second pack in order to prolong the game).
- The resource cards need to be shuffled and placed upside-down (cover the forefront). The same needs to be done with order cards.
- There need to be 3 order cards on the table (if there are 3-4 players) plus each player needs to take 6 resource cards (the person holds the cards in his/her hands in such a way that other players do not see them).
- The game is started by the player who has the strongest resource card (10 spades, then 10 heart, then 10 diamond, 10 club etc.), and the rest clockwise.

What are the rules of the game?

- Player who takes turn may create any order on the table. To do this he or she puts (if possible) cards of particular kind and value (according to order card and choosing from 6 resource cards in his/her hands) on the table e.g. for the order of Q heart one needs to put the resource cards of total value 12 (e.g. 3 heart + 4 heart + 5 heart or 2 heart + 10 heart), the order of J spade needs spade resource cards of total value equal 11).
- If a player does not have the needed cards at the beginning of the turn, he or she may exchange any number of resource cards of particular kind, e. g. spade (putting chosen cards on the pile of thrown off cards e.g. 1, 2 or 3 ...) on the exact same number of

cards from the resource pile. If he or she still does not hold the cards enabling the turn, then the next player starts his/her turn.

- After placing the order, the used resource cards go to the pile of thrown off cards. And the player adds a new order (from the pile of order cards) and takes new resource cards to his/her hands (from the resource pile) so that he/she always holds 6 cards in his/her hands. The player ends his/her turn (if he/she has just got good cards, he/she needs to wait for the next turn) and next player's turn starts.

Additional information:

- If one misses the resource cards, the player may shuffle the thrown off pile and place them as the 'new' resource cards.

MARKET BUSTERS – VERSION 2

(a game based on dedicated resource and order cards, edited for the purpose of the project's game)

What is the game about?

Players collect order cards (on the basis of resource cards) according to customers' needs (customers' needs are present on the table on the order cards laying on the table). They need to act fast as only 19 orders will be created on the market.

Who wins?

The winner is the player who has placed the most valuable/profitable orders.

What and how to prepare?

- The resource cards need to be shuffled and placed upside-down (cover the forepart). The same needs to be done with order cards.
- There need to be 3 order cards on the table (if there are 3-4 players) plus each player needs to take 5 resource cards (the person holds the cards in his/her hands in such a way that other players do not see them).
- The game is started by the player who has the largest number of employees' cards (if the number is equal – equipment, then – resources), and the rest players clockwise.

What are the rules of the game?

- Player who takes turn may place any order on the table. To do this he or she puts (if possible) cards of particular kind and number (according to order card and choosing from 5 resource cards in his/her hands) e.g. for the order for which 3 employees and 2 pieces of equipment are needed one needs to put the resource cards of 3 employees and 2 pieces of equipment
- If a player does not have the needed cards at the beginning of the turn, he or she may exchange any number of resource cards of particular kind once, e. g. pieces of equipment (putting chosen cards on the pile of thrown off cards e.g. 1, 2 or 3 ... cards) may be exchanged for the exact same number of cards from the resource pile. If he or she still does not hold the cards enabling the turn, then the next player starts his/her turn.
- After placing the order, the used resource cards go to the pile of thrown off cards. And the player adds a new order (from the pile of order cards) and takes new resource cards to his/her hands (from the resource pile) so that he/she always holds 5 cards in his/her hands. The player ends his/her turn (if he/she has just got good cards, he/she needs to wait for the next turn!) and next player's turn starts.

Additional information:

- If one misses the resource cards, the player may shuffle the thrown off pile and place them as the 'new' resource cards.

Additional information – the game's assumptions and how to meet them:

- turnover – a player invests the resources and starts production – he/she “buys” resources to place the orders (of different value)
- real market characteristics in the context of one's own sole proprietor company – the game shows that the market works thanks to orders which need certain resources,
- occupations' (business role) characteristics – unique cards for human resources emphasize the importance of the role in business for placing the orders e. g. the card of senior specialist may exchange two cards of junior employees.
- Employer-employee relations – the employees act as work resource and are led by the employers in the process of creating orders,
- The value of money and economics' notions – the game basis is the value of orders, which may be placed only if there are enough resources. The main themes are the following: sales, production factors, commercial exchanges, turnover, profit, etc.
- Creating entrepreneurial spirit – the game emphasises the necessity of placing orders which cannot be created without necessary resources etc.

References:

NESTA (2013), Five proposals for improving the use of games for learning in the UK, <http://www.nesta.org.uk/blog/five-proposals-improving-use-games-learning-uk>

Prensky, M. (2005), In digital games for education, complexity matters, „Educational Technology”, 45(4).

Ruben, B. (1999), Simulations, games and experience-based learning: The quest for a new paradigm for teaching and learning, „Simulation and gaming”, 30(4).

Stewart, J., Bleumers, L., Van Looy, J., Marlin, I., All, A., Schurmans, D., Wilaert, K., De Grove, F., Jacobs, A. and Misuraca, G. (2013), The Potential of Digital Games for Empowerment and Social Inclusion of Groups at Risk of Social and Economic Exclusion: Evidence and Opportunity for Policy, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

The examples of graphics, respecting copyrights, which may potentially be used during cards' graphical processing:

- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/30478819@N08/24582091828>
- <https://pixabay.com/pl/fabryka-roslin-maszyny-produkcja-40621/>
- <https://pixabay.com/pl/przemysl-przemyslowa-4-0-2692640/>
- <https://pxhere.com/id/photo/334943>
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- <https://svgsilh.com/4caf50/image/559970.html>
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