



„Mind the future“

Key Action 2: Strategic Partners Call 2023 Erasmus+ Programme
2023-1-NL01-KA220-VET-000157644

Business Empathy(BE) Games Playbook

Circulation: Project partners, national agency
Confidential Partners: Mind the future
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Date: 30 September 2024
Version 1



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Introduction

Welcome to the *Empathy Business Games Playbook*, a resource designed to deepen our understanding of empathy and its vital role in fostering more connected, compassionate, and inclusive communities. Whether you are new to the concept of empathy or looking to refine your skills, this playbook will guide you through engaging activities and games that encourage the exploration of different perspectives and emotional landscapes. Empathy is more than just understanding someone else's feelings—it's the ability to step into their shoes, see the world through their eyes, and respond with care and sensitivity.

In today's rapidly evolving world, where technology often bridges human interaction, empathy has become an essential skill, not just for personal relationships but also for professional success and social cohesion. By practicing empathy, we enhance our ability to collaborate, solve problems creatively, and foster meaningful connections with those around us. This playbook introduces you to various activities that emphasize these skills, allowing you to experience empathy in action.



What is Empathy

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings, thoughts, and perspectives of another person. It goes beyond mere sympathy, which involves feeling sorrow for someone else's misfortunes, and moves into the realm of truly sensing what another person is experiencing. Empathy enables a deeper connection between people, as it allows individuals to step outside of their own experiences and emotions to better understand those of others.

The concept of empathy plays a central role in human relationships, helping us navigate social interactions with compassion, care, and emotional insight. It is fundamental to conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, and even leadership. However, empathy is not just a singular trait—it encompasses different dimensions that shape how we respond to others.

Dimensions of Empathy

Empathy can be broken down into three primary types: cognitive empathy, emotional empathy, and compassionate empathy.

1. **Cognitive Empathy** refers to the ability to understand another person's perspective or mental state. This form of empathy is often associated with intellectual comprehension, where one can "step into someone else's shoes" mentally and grasp what they are thinking or feeling, even if one doesn't experience the emotions themselves. Cognitive empathy is particularly important in communication and negotiation, as it helps individuals anticipate others' responses and understand their motivations without being emotionally overwhelmed.
2. **Emotional Empathy** involves actually feeling what another person is feeling. It's a visceral, emotional response that mirrors the other person's emotions. For example, when we see someone in distress, emotional empathy triggers a physical reaction in us, such as sadness, tears, or anxiety. This form of empathy can strengthen social bonds and motivate supportive behavior. However, it also has the potential to lead to "empathy fatigue," especially in caregiving professions, where constantly absorbing others' emotional pain can become overwhelming.
3. **Compassionate Empathy** goes one step further by combining cognitive and emotional empathy with the desire to help. It is often considered the most actionable form of



empathy, as it not only allows us to understand and feel what someone else is going through but also motivates us to take steps to improve their situation. This is the form of empathy most commonly associated with altruistic behavior, where understanding leads to action.

Theories of Empathy

Several theories explain the mechanisms and significance of empathy. Understanding these theories provides insight into how empathy functions and how it can be developed.

1. **The Theory of Mind (ToM)** is a crucial theory linked to cognitive empathy. ToM refers to the capacity to understand that other people have their own thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and desires that are different from one's own. This ability is essential in developing social relationships and is often seen as a key milestone in human development. Typically, children begin to demonstrate Theory of Mind around the age of four, which is when they can recognize that other people may hold false beliefs or have a perspective different from their own. Impairments in Theory of Mind are often observed in individuals with autism spectrum disorders, which can affect their ability to empathize with others.
2. **Mirror Neuron Theory** provides a neurological explanation for empathy, particularly emotional empathy. Mirror neurons are a special class of neurons that activate both when we perform an action and when we observe someone else performing the same action. This mirroring allows us to internally "simulate" the experiences of others, giving rise to a sense of shared experience. For example, if we see someone hurt themselves, our mirror neurons may trigger a sensation similar to the pain they are feeling, fostering an emotional response in us. The discovery of mirror neurons has been significant in linking empathy to neurological processes and demonstrating that empathy might be hardwired into our brains.
3. **Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis**, proposed by psychologist C. Daniel Batson, argues that empathy is a powerful driver of altruistic behavior. According to Batson, when we feel empathy toward another person, we are motivated to help them out of genuine concern



for their well-being, rather than for personal gain. This theory suggests that true empathy can lead to selfless actions, where the ultimate goal is to alleviate another's suffering without expecting anything in return. This contrasts with egoistic motivations for helping, where the goal is to gain some benefit, such as avoiding guilt or gaining social approval.

4. **Affective-Reflective Theory (ART)** explores how people regulate their empathetic responses. This theory suggests that empathy is not just an automatic response; it can be modulated depending on situational factors and an individual's personal values or goals. In some cases, individuals may consciously choose to suppress empathetic feelings to protect themselves from emotional overload or to maintain objectivity in challenging situations. This theory is particularly relevant in professional settings, such as healthcare or law enforcement, where empathy needs to be balanced with practicality.

The Role of Empathy in Society

Empathy plays a pivotal role in promoting cooperation, social bonding, and conflict resolution. In the context of social justice, empathy is essential for understanding and addressing the experiences of marginalized or disadvantaged groups. It encourages people to move beyond their own experiences and to consider how systems of inequality affect others. In leadership, empathy fosters better communication, builds trust, and increases morale among teams.

In the modern world, where technological advancement has altered the nature of human interaction, empathy remains a critical skill for fostering genuine connections. Whether in personal relationships or across digital platforms, empathy allows us to navigate complex emotional landscapes, bridging the gap between different perspectives.

Ultimately, empathy is more than just a personal trait—it is a tool for building a more compassionate and interconnected society. By understanding and practicing the different forms of empathy, we can create environments that promote understanding, cooperation, and kindness.



The Empathy Persona

Alexi is our central persona. They were co-created through a collaborative effort by our consortium, thoughtfully integrating the diverse cultures, norms, and perspectives of our partners. Alexi represents a young person in the European Union, embodying the shared values, challenges, and aspirations of today's youth across the continent. This persona reflects the collective insights of our consortium, ensuring inclusivity and relevance while capturing the complexity of navigating modern European life.

Meet Alexi

Background: Alexi is a 19-year-old individual with a diverse set of passions ranging from sustainability and human behaviour to technology and agriculture. Raised in a community that values hard work and innovation, Alexi has developed a deep interest in making a positive impact on both the local and global stage. They are currently engaged in various activities including environmental advocacy, mental health awareness, and the pursuit of athletic excellence, all while managing academic and familial responsibilities.



Personality: Known for being empathetic, curious, and resilient, Alexi possesses a strong sense of justice and inclusivity. They are creative, ambitious, and always willing to take the initiative in rallying peers around important causes. Despite facing challenges, Alexi maintains an optimistic outlook and is not afraid to push boundaries and explore new ideas.

Interests: Alexi is deeply interested in exploring the intersections between technology and sustainability, human psychology, and social justice. They enjoy participating in sports, particularly basketball, and have a keen interest in nutrition and healthy living. In their free time, Alexi loves to engage in artistic pursuits, read about entrepreneurial success stories, and stay informed on international trends and political climates. Technology, especially advancements in



AI, drones, and digital solutions for agriculture and business efficiency, captivates their imagination..

Goals: Alexi's overarching goal is to make a tangible difference in the world by addressing critical issues such as sustainability, mental health education, and technological innovation in traditional sectors. They aspire to inspire others, transform their innovative ideas into reality, and advocate for a more enlightened and inclusive society.

Challenges: Alexi faces a variety of challenges, including balancing a rigorous academic and extracurricular schedule, overcoming societal norms and stigmas, and finding the resources and support needed to bring their ambitious ideas to fruition. They also struggle with motivating their peers and navigating the complexities of implementing advanced technological solutions in traditional settings.

Aspirations: Looking forward, Alexi dreams of pursuing higher education in fields that bridge their diverse interests, such as environmental science, psychology, social studies, and technology. They aspire to create ventures or initiatives that contribute positively to society, advocate for environmental sustainability within their communities, and become a pioneer in introducing new technologies to traditional industries.



BE Games

Overview

During the first year of the project, each partner site collaborated with the Alexi persona to design a BE (Business Empathy) game, tailored to reflect the unique insights and contexts of their region. These games were piloted and tested to ensure they resonated with participants and effectively fostered empathy. The following pages showcase seven of these games, each developed through this collaborative process, offering diverse approaches to empathy-building.

Game 1 Recognizing, acknowledging, and working with differences

BE Game Designed By: In cooperation with MentorProgramma Friesland (the Dutch partner of Mind the Future) and the Dutch Central Bureau of Jurisdiction.

Game Thematic: Culture game: business culture stereotypes.

Objectives of this BE-GAMES and Target Audience

Objectives: Developing a Human-Centred Mindset. Fostering Inclusivity and Diversity Awareness

Target Audience:

Students of Vocational education and University

Employees of the government institute (CJIB)

Implementation Approach

Materials Needed: Paper, markers, printouts of the "DISC personality types"

Game Set Up: Participants will be divided into pairs (preferably students paired with CJIB employees). Each group will have access to the materials needed for the game.

Guidance for Facilitators: Facilitators should encourage active participation, empathy, and open dialogue among participants.

Key Activities and Games

Description of Core Activities:

Icebreaker (5 min):



Participants are paired up (preferably students with CJIB employees).

Each person tells their partner which color they associate with them based on a first impression.

Choose from: Red, Green, Blue, Yellow.

Introduction (5 min):

Explain the purpose of the workshop: Understanding why people act the way they do and developing empathy for others.

Self-Scan (5 min):

Participants complete a self-assessment to determine which behaviors they exhibit most frequently. They circle the traits that apply to them.

Comparison (5 min):

Participants compare their self-assessments with their partners.

Discuss which color had the most points circled and whether it matches the color initially assigned by their partner.

Identify similarities and differences.

Group Formation (5 min):

Participants form groups based on the color they most identified with in the self-assessment.

Strategy Development (5 min):

Each color group develops a strategy to represent their color to the rest of the participants. This can be a drawing, a skit, a poem/story, etc. This already asks a lot of empathic involvement from the participants.

Presentation (5 min):

Each group presents their representation of their color to the rest of the participants. Participants who observe the game try to acknowledge the qualities shown by the others.

Evaluation (5 min):

Participants reflect on and evaluate the workshop.

Learning Outcomes (students)



Skills and Competencies Acquired: Improved ability to recognize and deal with different personality types. Enhanced communication skills, Increased empathy

Impact on Students' Mindsets Towards Diversity and Inclusion: Greater understanding and appreciation of diversity, Improved ability to work effectively in diverse teams

Empathy Development in Entrepreneurship and Leadership: Enhanced empathy can lead to better leadership and decision-making skills

Impact on Stakeholders

Transformation in Teachers' Approaches to Inclusive Education: Facilitators can adapt the game to other educational settings, promoting inclusivity and diversity awareness. The selftest can also be adapted to more theoretical or practical depending on the educational level of the participants.

Contributions to Responsible Business Practices: Participants can apply the skills learned in the game to create a more inclusive and diverse workplace.

Building a Human-Centred Society: By fostering empathy and understanding, the game contributes to creating a more compassionate and inclusive society.

Game 2 :Empathy Map

BE Game Designed By: KAUTECH (Lithuania)

Game Thematic: Stakeholder game: debates and role playing

Objectives of this BE-GAMES and Target Audience

It is commonly believed in the power of empathy to positively transform student and teacher experience. If a person has been in a school for any length of time, they know that whether they've asked for it or not, they're bound to encounter extremely vulnerable situations. For example, each day teachers and students are on the front lines of complex, deeply human questions—questions about difference and belonging, privilege and ability, acceptance and conflict. Teachers know the daily significance of modeling higher order emotional intelligence, including practicing compassion, love, and tolerance. As schools become more centered on the unique needs of each student, and as we continue to embrace the diversity of our schools, we will need to continue to practice and cultivate empathy for our students and for each other in



this way fostering inclusivity and diversity awareness. The target audience for this game is students and teachers.

Implementation Approach

The only tools needed for this practice are the following: a pen, a piece of paper or a whiteboard.

Key Activities and Games

Empathy maps can be a powerful tool to build deeper understanding of how our words and actions connect to our thoughts and feelings. Empathy maps are divided into four sections: Think, Feel, Say, Do. Lead students through an example, using yourself as a model. (Ex: When I feel nervous, I might think I'm making mistakes. When I feel this way, I apologize a lot (say) and often take a deep breath (do).) On a whiteboard or bulletin, draw a circle at the center and label it "our class". Then divide the board into four quadrants, labeled: Think, Feel, Say, Do. Each student receives four post-it notes. Ask students to write down one emotion they sometimes feel, a thought they connect to that emotion, an action they take when they have that feeling, and something they might say. Each student takes turns posting on the board. Set the tone at the start of the activity to ensure active, compassionate listening.

Depending on the age of the group, highlight that sometimes we say something that is the opposite of what we're actually feeling and discuss why. It is also possible to leave the bulletin up for some longer time and invite students to continuously add to it as they build deeper understanding.

Learning Outcomes (students)

For this activity to teach empathy, students must feel emotionally safe. Ground rules must be set (like confidentiality) before starting. And this activity should never be used to single certain students out or make a point — for example, with only racism-based questions this activity should never be used, if there are a few students of color in the class. Diverse variety of questions and life experiences must be included.

Cultural and social awareness of students should be increased. Discussion in groups will broaden participants' awareness of cultural and social differences, encouraging a new point of view to empathy and diversity.



Impact on Stakeholders

Teachers and facilitators will obtain a new possibility to explain empathy and inclusivity to young learners. The role of empathy in schools will be better understood. Teachers and groups of students will get to know each other's needs and views better. Teachers' approaches to Inclusive Education will be transformed. Educators will get insights into the practical application of empathy in classroom, applying their teaching methodologies to students' abilities. When a teacher can understand a student's perspective, they can tailor their communication to be more effective. Mindful words and sensitive sentences are perceived better by students, and it reflects in their performance. In this way a human-centered society is built. Responsible business practices are encouraged.

Game 3 :Walk The Line

BE Game Designed By: KAUTECH (Lithuania)

Game Thematic: Stakeholder game: debates and role playing

Objectives of this BE-GAMES and Target Audience

This thought-provoking game gives students the opportunity to feel and share another person's emotions. It fosters inclusivity and diversity awareness. Adolescents in high school are forming their own identities and gaining more and more independence. Many older high school students may be preparing to leave their parents' homes and enter the "real world." Making sure they're equipped with empathy skills can help them be successful in school, work, and relationships as adults.

Target Audience for this game:

- Students in vocational education and training (VET)
- Entrepreneurs
- Educational facilitators, teachers

Implementation Approach:

The only tools needed for this game are the following: a pen, a piece of paper and a piece of tape.

Key Activities and Games



Students have to put the tape down the center of the room. Then they are divided into two groups, with the two groups facing each other on either side of the tape.

Teacher asks the class questions, and asks students to step forward toward the line if their answer to their question is “yes.” For example, teacher could ask questions like, “Have you ever lost someone you love?” or, “Have you ever been bullied?”

After each question, students are allowed around 5 seconds for self-reflection. Then, students who’ve stepped forward are asked to step back for the next question. After the activity is done, students reflect on their experience through writing or in small groups. What did they have in common with other students? What did they learn about their classmates?

Learning Outcomes(students)

For this activity to teach empathy, students must feel emotionally safe. Ground rules must be set (like confidentiality) before starting. And this activity should never be used to single certain students out or make a point — for example, with only racism-based questions this activity should never be used, if there are a few students of color in the class. Diverse variety of questions and life experiences must be included.

Cultural and social awareness of students should be increased. Discussion in groups will broaden participants' awareness of cultural and social differences, encouraging a new point of view to empathy and diversity.

Impact on Stakeholders

Teachers and facilitators will obtain a new possibility to explain empathy and inclusivity to young learners. The role of empathy in schools will be better understood. Teachers and groups of students will get to know each other’s needs and views better. Educators will get insights into the practical application of empathy in classroom, applying their teaching methodologies to students’ abilities. When a teacher can understand a student's perspective, they can tailor their communication to be more effective. Mindful words and sensitive sentences are perceived better by students, and it reflects in their performance. In this way a human-centered society is built.

Game 4 :Matching Pairs

BE Game Designed By: Escola Pia Mataró



Game Thematic: Value game: a card game one-on-one, about values (mine, yours, ours), qualities

Objectives of this BE-GAMES and Target Audience

The objective of the game is to match pairs of scenarios or emotions that require empathy while fostering understanding and empathy towards others.

Mindset skills help students and entrepreneurs understand their emotions, set positive goals, show empathy for others, establish healthy relationships, value diversity and inclusion, make responsible decisions, focus, and stay organized, besides taking care of the environment.

The target audience for this game are VET students and regional entrepreneurs.

Implementation Approach

Materials:

- Set of cards with matching pairs,
- alternatively, pieces of paper + pen or markers

On each index card or piece of paper, we write down different scenarios or emotions that require empathy. Here are some examples:

- Someone is feeling lonely at school/workplace
- A friend is upset because failed a test.
- A family member lost their job.
- A classmate/colleague is being bullied.
- Someone is nervous about giving a presentation.
- Student is nervous before a job interview
- A colleague is going through a difficult divorce.
- A partner is feeling overwhelmed with work.
- A teammate is struggling with a personal problem.

Game Set Up

Players take turns flipping over two cards at a time, trying to find matching pairs of scenarios or emotions that require empathy.



If a player finds a matching pair, they keep the cards, explain the meaning of the scenario or the emotion and get another turn. Allow time for open discussion as each player explains their pairs.

If the cards don't match, they are turned face down again, and it's the next player's turn.

The game continues until all the pairs have been found.

Key Activities and Games

Use a descriptive language to stimulate a strong emotional response from players when explaining the importance of empathy and problem-solving at work. This can help to emphasize the importance of these concepts and teamwork.

Provide scenarios illustrating how perspective sharing, empathy challenge, and collaborative problem-solving can be incorporated into the game to help players apply these concepts in real-life situations.

Discussion and reflection:

After all the pairs have been matched, sit down with the players and discuss each scenario or emotion. Encourage players to reflect on how they can apply empathy in their daily lives and interactions with others.

Example:

Scenario: A job interview. A nervous student expresses feelings through fidgeting, trembling voice, insecurity, and omitting main strengths. Entrepreneurs observe the interviewee.

Learning Outcomes (students)

Empathy Development:

Students will enhance their ability to understand and share the feelings of others by engaging with various scenarios and emotions presented in the game. Through discussing different scenarios, they will practice stepping into the shoes of others and seeing situations from multiple perspectives, fostering a deeper understanding of diverse experiences.

Communication Skills:



By discussing emotions and scenarios, students will improve their verbal communication skills as they articulate their thoughts, feelings, and responses to different situations. They will develop problem-solving abilities as they brainstorm and discuss ways to show empathy and support to individuals facing various challenges or emotions.

Relationship Building:

Through discussing empathy and supportive actions, students will learn strategies for building positive and supportive relationships with their peers, family members, and community members.

Collaboration and Cooperation:

Playing the game in groups promotes collaboration and cooperation as students work together to find matching pairs and engage in meaningful discussions about empathy and support.

Cultural Competence:

Discussing a variety of scenarios and emotions can help students develop cultural competence by recognizing and respecting the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and emotions of individuals from different cultures and communities.

Impact on Stakeholders

- **Transformation in Teachers' Approaches to Inclusive Education :** Enhanced Classroom Environment: By promoting empathy and understanding, the game can contribute to a more inclusive and supportive classroom environment where all students feel valued and respected. Improved Student Relationships: Students who develop empathy skills are more likely to build positive relationships with their peers and contribute to a more harmonious school community. Increased Teacher Effectiveness: Teachers who incorporate empathy-building activities into their teaching practices are better equipped to meet the diverse needs of their students and create inclusive learning environments.
- **Contributions to Responsible Business Practices:** Enhanced Employee Morale: When employees feel valued and understood, they are more likely to be engaged and motivated, which leads to increased productivity and job satisfaction. Improved Customer Loyalty: Companies that demonstrate empathy and understanding toward their customers are likely to build stronger brand loyalty and receive positive word-of-mouth recommendations. Positive Social Impact: By promoting empathy education and responsible business practices,



companies can contribute to building more compassionate and socially responsible communities.

- **Building a Human-Centred Society: Stronger Social Cohesion:** Valuing and practicing empathy in society leads to stronger social bonds and greater cooperation among individuals and communities. **Reduced Conflict:** Empathy helps bridge differences and resolve conflicts peacefully, leading to a more harmonious and inclusive society. **Promotion of Human Rights:** Encouraging empathy fosters respect for human dignity and promotes the protection of human rights for all individuals, regardless of background or identity.

Game 5 :Empathy quest: Perspectives Unveiled

BE Game Designed By: University of Galway.

Game Thematic: Value game: a card game one-on-one, about values (mine, yours, ours), qualities (mine, yours, ours), pains (mine, yours, ours) and ambitions (mine, yours, ours)

Game Overview:

Empathy Quest: Perspectives Unveiled is an interactive, role-playing game designed to be played in classroom settings or workshops. The game involves participants assuming the roles of various characters, each with unique backgrounds, challenges, and viewpoints. Players navigate through a series of scenarios related to business, social issues, and daily life, with the aid of carefully selected images that represent different perspectives and situations.

Objectives of this BE-GAMES and Target Audience: To equip players with the ability to understand and appreciate diverse perspectives, thereby fostering empathy, inclusivity, and a human-centered approach to problem-solving in entrepreneurship and leadership.

Target Audience

- Students in vocational education and training (VET)
- Young entrepreneurs
- Educational facilitators and trainers

Implementation Approach

Materials Needed:



A set of character cards, each detailing the background, current situation, and goals of a character.

A series of image cards, depicting various scenarios, challenges, and contexts relevant to the characters' lives and the broader business and social landscape.

Scenario cards, outlining specific situations or challenges to be addressed by the players.

Reflection and discussion guides for facilitators.

Game Setup:

Character Assignment: Players are assigned different characters based on the character cards. Each character has a distinct set of objectives, challenges, and perspectives.

Scenario Presentation: A scenario card is presented to the group, detailing a situation that requires empathy, problem-solving, and decision-making.

Image Exploration: Players are shown a series of images that relate to the scenario. These images are designed to evoke emotional responses, highlight diverse perspectives, and provide context to the challenges presented.

Key Activities and Games

Perspective Sharing: Each player explores the scenario from their character's perspective, using the images as a basis to express how their character might feel, think, and react to the situation.

Empathy Challenge: Players must then step into the shoes of another character, using another set of images to explore the scenario from a different perspective.

Collaborative Problem-Solving: After exploring various perspectives, players collaborate to propose solutions that address the needs and concerns of all involved characters, discussing the potential impacts and benefits of their proposed solutions.

Reflection and Discussion: The game concludes with a guided reflection and discussion session, where players share insights gained about empathy, diversity, and inclusivity.

Example Scenario:

Scenario: "The New Product Launch" - Your company is about to launch a new product that aims to be accessible and appealing to a diverse customer base. Players explore this scenario from the perspectives of different stakeholders, including customers from various cultural



backgrounds, company employees with different roles, and community members affected by the product launch. Images: Images could include diverse groups of people interacting with the product, internal company meetings discussing design and marketing strategies, and community settings that might be impacted by the product.

Learning Outcomes(Students)

Enhanced Empathy and Sensitivity: Participants are expected to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for diverse perspectives and challenges, enhancing their empathy towards others.

Improved Problem-Solving Skills: By engaging in collaborative problem-solving that considers various viewpoints, participants will refine their ability to devise inclusive solutions that address complex challenges.

Increased Cultural and Social Awareness: Exposure to diverse scenarios and perspectives will broaden participants' awareness of cultural and social differences, fostering a more inclusive approach to business and leadership.

Development of a Human-Centered Mindset: Through the practice of empathy and consideration of diverse needs, participants will cultivate a human-centered approach to entrepreneurship, prioritizing the well-being and perspectives of all stakeholders in their decision-making processes.

Through Empathy Quest: Perspectives Unveiled, participants engage in deep, meaningful exploration of empathy in a business context, leveraging the power of images to connect emotionally and intellectually with various perspectives. This game serves as a practical tool for instilling empathy, inclusivity, and a human-centered mindset in future leaders and entrepreneurs.

Impact on Stakeholders.

Impact on Educators and Facilitators

- **New Pedagogical Tools:** Educators and facilitators will gain a dynamic and interactive tool for teaching empathy and inclusivity, enriching their pedagogical repertoire.



- **Enhanced Understanding of Empathy in Education:** Facilitating the game will provide educators with insights into the practical application of empathy in learning environments, potentially transforming their teaching methodologies to incorporate more empathetic and inclusive strategies.
- **Opportunities for Professional Development:** Engaging with the game and its outcomes can offer educators personal and professional growth opportunities, particularly in areas related to social and emotional learning, diversity, and inclusion.

Impact on Educational Institutions

- **Fostering Inclusive Educational Environments:** Implementing the game within educational programs can contribute to creating more inclusive and empathetic learning environments, where diversity is valued and explored constructively.
- **Curriculum Innovation:** The integration of games like "Empathy Quest" can drive curriculum innovation, encouraging the adoption of experiential and interactive learning methods that address the soft skills crucial for the 21st century.
- **Community Engagement:** Educational institutions may find opportunities to engage with local communities through the game, fostering partnerships and collaborative initiatives that address real-world challenges through empathy and inclusivity.

Impact on the Broader Community and Business Ecosystem

- **Promotion of Responsible Business Practices:** As participants carry the lessons learned from the game into their professional lives, they are likely to advocate for and implement more responsible, inclusive business practices that consider the needs and perspectives of diverse stakeholders.
- **Enhancement of Social Cohesion:** By valuing and understanding diverse perspectives, participants can contribute to enhanced social cohesion, working towards communities that are more inclusive and understanding of different experiences and challenges.
- **Contribution to a Human-Centered Society:** Ultimately, the widespread adoption and impact of "Empathy Quest" could contribute to a shift towards a more human-centered society, where empathy, inclusivity, and understanding guide personal, business, and community



Game 6 :The Workplace Challenge

BE Game Designed By: IDEC

Game Thematic: Stakeholder game: debates and role playing

Game Overview:

Empathizers work together to overcome a workplace challenge while identifying the deceivers. However, the deceivers are limited in their disruptive behaviour, shifting the focus towards positive communication, and finding solutions.

Objectives of this BE-GAMES and Target Audience

- By encouraging players to consider the perspectives of both Empathizers and Deceivers, this game fosters empathy and understanding of different needs and motivations within a team.
- The game highlights the importance of collaboration and effective communication despite having different roles and goals.
- Players practice active listening, offering solutions that consider diverse needs, and building consensus, all of which are crucial leadership skills.

Target Audience:

- Office Teams
- VET students
- young entrepreneurs

Implementation Approach

Materials:

- paper
- pens

Game Set Up:

1. **Write the Scenario:** Briefly describe a common workplace challenge on a piece of paper (e.g., low morale, communication breakdown, missed deadlines).



2. **Assign Roles:** Divide players into two groups (Empathizers and Deceivers) by writing down the roles on pieces of paper and letting the players randomly draw a folded piece of paper to get assigned their role.

Key Activities and Games

Rounds: The game progresses in rounds with discussion and voting phases.

Discussion Phase: Players discuss the workplace challenge and brainstorm solutions. Empathizers genuinely try to address the challenge and improve the work environment. Deceivers try to subtly sow discord and create negativity, but within boundaries to avoid revealing themselves.

Empathy in Action: Players earn Empathy Tokens during discussions by demonstrating empathy. This could involve:

- Suggesting solutions that consider everyone's needs.
- Actively listening to others' concerns.
- Offering words of encouragement or support.

Voting Phase: After discussion, players anonymously vote for who they suspect is a Deceiver (based on behavior, not accusations). The player with the most votes is temporarily removed from the discussion.

Continuing the Game: The game continues with discussions and voting, with Empathizers trying to identify Deceivers and complete tasks related to the workplace challenge (e.g., brainstorming solutions, roleplaying better communication).

Winning: Empathizers win if they successfully complete the tasks and identify all Deceivers before time runs out. Deceivers win if they can create enough negativity and discord to hinder the team's progress.

Example Scenario:

You work for a mid-sized tech company that has been experiencing significant growth over the past year. However, with growth has come growing pains. The once tight-knit team is now struggling with low morale, communication breakdowns, and missed project deadlines. The CEO, Maria, has noticed that the recent influx of new employees has led to cliques forming, which has contributed to a fragmented work environment. The company is at a critical juncture, and Maria believes that addressing these issues promptly is essential to maintaining their



upward trajectory. Maria has decided to implement "The Workplace Challenge" BE-GAME to foster empathy and improve team dynamics. She hopes that by encouraging her employees to understand each other's perspectives, the team will be able to rebuild trust and work together more effectively.

Learning Outcomes(students)

- Develops empathy and understanding of different perspectives within a team.
- Promotes collaboration and problem-solving skills.
- Encourages positive communication and active listening.
- Highlights the importance of empathy in leadership and team dynamics.

Impact on Stakeholders

- **Managers and Leaders:**
 - **Empathy in Leadership:** The game highlights the significance of empathy in leadership by showcasing how considering employee needs and fostering positive communication leads to better problem-solving.
 - **Identifying Training Needs:** By observing player interactions, managers might identify areas where employees need additional training in communication or conflict resolution.
 - **Promoting a Positive Work Environment:** The game can be used as a springboard for discussions on fostering empathy and positive workplace practices.
- **Educational Institutions:**
 - **Interactive Learning Tool:** This game can be a fun and engaging tool for educators to teach empathy, social awareness, and collaborative problem-solving in business or communication courses.
 - **Developing Future Leaders:** Equipping students with empathy skills prepares them to be more effective leaders who can build strong teams and navigate complex workplace dynamics.

Game 7 :Bridge of Empathy

BE Game Designed By: TED BURSA COLLEGE (Turkey)



GAME RULES

Make empathy: Encourage empathetic behavior throughout the game.

Winning Condition: Players win by reaching the finish line.

Team Composition: Each team should consist of 2 to 3 people.

Game Tiers:

Tier 1: Includes generic card decks provided by producers (forbidden, drawing, joker).

Tier 2: Involves custom cards made by players with AI assistance based on prompts.

Card Categories: Cards are categorized into acting, 15 words, and specific letter.

Roulette: When landing on a tile with a roulette, players spin and explain a problem based on the result.

AI Assistance: An online AI is used to generate prompts and create custom cards based on player responses.

Problem Generation: Each player must contribute a problem based on given prompts.

Materials:

Monopoly Board: Sturdy cardboard material that can withstand folding without significant damage.

PVC: Used for certain game components.

Thin Cardboard / Thick Paper: Material for Monopoly chance cards.

Roulette: Base made of cardboard, needle made of plastic or recycled ready-made needle.

Prompts:

Prompt-filled papers.

Instructions paper: QR code will be included on the back cover.

Plastic Game Pieces: 3D printed with colors and facial expressions suitable for emotions.

The Packaging.



Card Content:

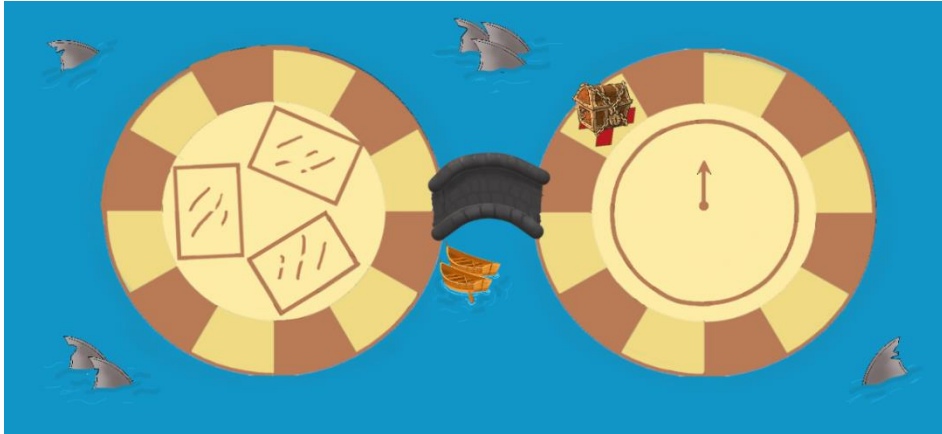
- ✓ Mobbing
- ✓ Low pay
- ✓ Long working hours
- ✓ Too much work
- ✓ Fitting in
- ✓ Problems between co-workers
- ✓ Gossiping
- ✓ Harassment
- ✓ Discrimination
- ✓ Complainers
- ✓ Status differences
- ✓ Lack of trust
- ✓ Physical discomfort
- ✓ Anxiety
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Lack of motivation
- ✓ Aggression
- ✓ Isolation and/or loneliness
- ✓ Lack of proper resources
- ✓ Burnout
- ✓ Job insecurity
- ✓ Work-life balance
- ✓ High expectations
- ✓ Headaches
- ✓ Plagiarism
- ✓ Poor physical conditions of the work environment
- ✓ Hierarchy
- ✓ Nepotism
- ✓ Poor management
- ✓ Disagreement between coworkers
- ✓ Extreme Rivalry
- ✓ Unfair treatment
- ✓ Power abuse
- ✓ Misogyny
- ✓ Blackmail
- ✓ Unsatisfying vacation durations
- ✓ Importance of science, sports, and art in personal development
- ✓ Insurance related problems
- ✓ Dress code
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Inadequate training
- ✓ Job dissatisfaction
- ✓ Invasion of privacy
- ✓ Lack of diversity
- ✓ Limited growth opportunities



- ✓ Unjustifiable corporate rules
- ✓ Lack of appreciation
- ✓ Lack of crisis management
- ✓ Difficult customers/clients/patients

Writing Instructions:

For Drawing: 7 cards





Game 8 :Empathy Game for Business Training: A Classroom Approach

Value Game (One-on-One Card Game)

BE Game Designed By: TED BURSA COLLEGE (Turkey)

Objective:

To help students understand values and qualities, and to connect them with the business world. Participants will reflect on their own values (personal and professional), then compare them with others to find common ground.

Game Setup:

- Materials: Value cards with words such as “Integrity,” “Innovation,” “Sustainability.”
- Participants: Pairs of students.
- Instructions:
 - Each participant picks 5 cards that reflect their personal values.
 - They must discuss and explain why these values are essential in their professional life.
 - Next, they compare their cards to their partner’s, discussing similarities, differences, and how shared values can guide decision-making in business.

Example Value Card Words for the Empathy Game:

1. Integrity
2. Innovation
3. Collaboration
4. Sustainability
5. Respect
6. Transparency
7. Resilience
8. Creativity
9. Diversity
10. Accountability
11. Empathy
12. Efficiency
13. Adaptability
14. Trustworthiness
15. Compassion



16. Courage
17. Equity
18. Leadership
19. Community
20. Responsibility

These values can encourage deeper discussions about personal and business priorities, helping student reflect on how different qualities shape decision-making.



Game 9 :Stakeholder Perspectives: Empathy In Action

BE Game Designed By:University of Galway

Game Thematic: Stakeholder game: debates and role playing

Objectives of this BE Game and Target Audience:

Objective: Develop empathy for different roles and stakeholders within a business environment by understanding their challenges, goals, and perspectives. This game helps to foster inclusivity, improve decision-making, and enhance problem-solving abilities through empathetic thinking.

Target Audience: Young people aged 15-17 interested in learning about business, entrepreneurship, or social responsibility.

Implementation Approach:

Materials Needed:

- Printed role cards for different stakeholders (e.g., CEO, employee, customer, supplier, community representative)
- Scenario cards depicting common business situations or dilemmas
- Whiteboard or flipchart for brainstorming solutions

Game Set Up:

- Divide students into small groups of 4-5.
- Each student receives a role card with their stakeholder's background, goals, and challenges.
- Provide each group with a business scenario that requires a decision (e.g., launching a new product, dealing with an environmental issue, deciding on employee benefits).

Key Activities and Games:



- **Core Activity:**
 - Students engage in a structured debate. Each participant represents their assigned stakeholder and must advocate for their stakeholder's priorities and concerns while considering the viewpoints of others.
- **Steps:**
 1. **Introduction:** Facilitator presents the scenario and assigns stakeholder roles.
 2. **Role Exploration:** Students spend a few minutes reading their role cards and preparing arguments from their stakeholder's perspective.
 3. **Debate:** Each stakeholder presents their views and advocates for a solution. After all presentations, a group discussion follows to try and reach a compromise or collective decision.
 4. **Reflection:** After the debate, students reflect on how it felt to step into someone else's shoes and how understanding different perspectives influenced the decision-making process.
- **Guidance for Facilitators:**
 - Ensure all voices are heard, and participants understand the importance of compromise in decision-making.
 - Encourage students to challenge their initial assumptions and biases about business decisions and roles.

Learning Outcomes (students):

- **Skills and Competencies Acquired:**
 - Empathy development by understanding various stakeholder perspectives
 - Enhanced communication and debate skills
 - Improved teamwork and collaboration
 - Awareness of the complexities of business decisions
- **Impact on Students' Mindsets:**
 - Greater appreciation for diversity and inclusion within a business setting
 - Understanding of the human-centered approach to leadership and decision-making
- **Empathy Development in Entrepreneurship and Leadership:**
 - Students will develop the ability to consider multiple perspectives before making business decisions, promoting empathy-driven leadership.



Impact on Stakeholders:

- **Impact on Teachers:**
 - This game encourages teachers to implement more empathy-driven activities in their lessons, promoting inclusivity in education.
- **Contributions to Responsible Business Practices:**
 - Students gain insights into how empathetic decision-making can lead to more responsible, ethical, and inclusive business practices.
- **Building a Human-Centred Society:**
 - This game instills the importance of considering all stakeholders in decision-making, ultimately promoting a more human-centered approach to business.



Game 10 :The Blue Balloon Empathy Challenge

BE Game Designed By:University of Galway

Game Thematic: Stakeholder game: debates and role playing

Credits: This game is inspired by the Blue Balloon Challenge originally developed by Medtronic, which emphasizes empathy in handling delicate situations under pressure. We have adapted this challenge for our Empathy Business Games Playbook to focus on the role of empathy in teamwork and leadership.

Objective:

- To help participants understand the importance of empathy in business contexts by placing themselves in different roles and experiencing the limitations and challenges faced by individuals in the workplace.
- Focus on teamwork, problem-solving, and communication, while fostering a deeper understanding of others' perspectives.

Target Audience:

- University students, business professionals, or vocational trainees interested in improving teamwork, communication, and leadership skills.

Materials Needed:

- Balloons (preferably blue, one per participant)
- Blindfolds or hand restrictors (e.g., gloves that limit hand movement)
- Scenario cards with business challenges or customer complaints
- Empathy tokens (to reward participants for empathetic actions)
- A timer

Game Setup:

1. **Introduction (5 min):**
 - Explain the importance of empathy in business, highlighting how understanding others' needs can lead to better collaboration and decision-making.
 - Introduce the Blue Balloon Challenge, which will focus on handling tasks while under limitations.
2. **Divide participants into teams (2-4 per team).**
 - Each team is tasked with a business scenario such as managing a project deadline, launching a product, or resolving a customer issue.
 - One participant in each team will wear a blindfold or restrictive gloves (limiting their hand mobility), simulating a physical limitation.
 - Another participant will hold a blue balloon while performing tasks (representing a delicate balance between workload and emotional burden).



Key Activities:

1. **Scenario Task (10 min):**
 - Each team must work together to solve the scenario challenge while under their assigned limitations.
 - Participants must ensure that their teammate with the balloon doesn't drop it, symbolizing the emotional toll on individuals in high-pressure situations.
2. **Reflection Discussion (10 min):**
 - Once the task is completed, each team reflects on the experience.
 - How did they manage the task while dealing with the physical limitations and the pressure of not dropping the balloon?
 - How did the team adapt their communication and problem-solving strategies?
 - Encourage teams to consider how the empathy they demonstrated impacted their performance.
3. **Empathy Tokens (Throughout the game):**
 - Award empathy tokens to teams that exhibit behaviors like active listening, offering assistance, and considering the needs of all team members, especially those under limitations.
 - Teams with the most tokens will be recognized for their empathy-driven collaboration.

Learning Outcomes:

- **Empathy in Action:** Participants experience first-hand the impact of limitations on performance, learning how to adapt and offer support in stressful situations.
- **Improved Communication:** Teams learn to communicate effectively under constraints, enhancing their problem-solving skills.
- **Enhanced Team Dynamics:** Participants gain insights into how empathy fosters stronger, more resilient teams in business environments.

Impact on Stakeholders:

- **Students/Professionals:** Gain a practical understanding of how empathy plays a crucial role in leadership and teamwork, preparing them for real-world challenges.
- **Facilitators:** This activity can be adapted to different business settings, offering a versatile tool for empathy training in educational or corporate environments.



Game 11 :Mirroring Emotions

BE Game Designed By: Escola Pia Mataró

Game Thematic: Stakeholder game: debates and role playing

Objectives of this BE Game and Target Audience:

Objectives:

- Developing a Human-Centred Mindset. The game helps players become more attuned to the emotions of others, which is crucial in creating empathetic and human-centred leaders and entrepreneurs.
- Fostering Inclusivity and Diversity Awareness. By encouraging emotional reflection, participants can appreciate diverse emotional expressions, backgrounds, and perspectives, fostering a more inclusive mindset.
- Enhancing Entrepreneurial and Leadership Skills Through Empathy. The ability to understand and mirror the emotions of others is key in leadership and business settings, where emotional intelligence often drives successful decision-making and team cohesion.

Target Audience: Young adults, professionals, and students aged 15 and above. Ideal Setting: Leadership and entrepreneurship workshops, diversity and inclusion training, educational institutions, or team-building exercises.

Implementation Approach:

Materials Needed:

- Emotion cards or scenarios that depict various emotional situations (e.g., happy, frustrated, confused).
- A timer to manage the length of each round.
- Reflection sheets for participants to jot down their feelings after each interaction.

Game Set Up:

- Players are grouped in pairs or small teams.
- One player expresses an emotion (verbally or through body language), while the other mirrors it back.
- After each round, both players reflect on how it felt to express and mirror the emotion.



Key Activities and Games:

1. Core Activities:

- Emotion Reflection Exercise: Players are given a set of emotions to act out in pairs, with the objective of mirroring each other as accurately as possible.
- Emotional Scenario Challenge: A player describes a real-life scenario where they experienced a strong emotion, and their partner mirrors the emotion in both body language and tone.

2. Examples of Empathy Games:

- "Mirror My Emotion" – One person acts out an emotion, and others guess while mirroring.
- "Emotional Role Reversal" – Players switch roles midway through an interaction to feel both sides of an emotional scenario.

3. Guidance for Facilitators:

- Emphasize the importance of authentic emotional reflection.
- Encourage players to explore a wide range of emotions, even difficult or uncomfortable ones.
- Facilitate discussions after each round to debrief how the emotions impacted their understanding of each other.

4 Step-by-Step Guidance

- Introduction, welcome and overview (5-10 minutes)
- Objectives and Learning Goals (3-5 minutes)
- Rules and Expectations (2-3 minutes)
- Role Exploration (30-40 minutes)
 - Step 1: Role Assignment and Emotion Cards (10 minutes)
 - Step 2: Emotional Expression and Mirroring (15-20 minutes)
 - Step 3: Debrief on Role Exploration (5 minutes)
- Short Role Exploration Debate (15-20 minutes):
 - Encourage participants to reflect on different perspectives.
 - Act as a moderator, ensuring everyone has a chance to contribute. Keep the conversation respectful and focused on how empathy can be applied in different contexts.
- Reflection and Wrap-Up (10-15 minutes)
 - Step 1: Group Reflection on Key Takeaways (5-7 minutes)
 - Step 2: Individual Reflection by students (5-8 minutes)
 - Step 3: Facilitator's Closing Remarks (3 minutes)

Learning Outcomes (students):

- **Skills and Competencies Acquired:**
 - Enhanced emotional intelligence and empathy.



- Greater capacity for non-verbal communication and active listening.
- Improved interpersonal skills, vital for leadership roles and collaborative work.
- **Impact on Students' Mindsets:**
 - Increased sensitivity to emotional diversity.
 - A deeper understanding of how emotions play a role in inclusive and equitable environments.
 - Awareness of how mirroring emotions helps bridge cultural and social differences.
- **Empathy Development in Entrepreneurship and Leadership:**
 - The game teaches future leaders how empathy can drive decision-making and team dynamics.
 - Participants learn to respond to emotional cues effectively, a key aspect of managing and motivating teams.

Impact on Stakeholders:

- **Transformation in Teachers' Approaches to Inclusive Education:**
 - Teachers can use mirroring techniques to better connect with students, particularly those from diverse backgrounds.
 - This game encourages a more personalized and emotionally aware teaching style.
- **Contributions to Responsible Business Practices:**
 - Empathetic leaders foster workplace environments where diverse teams can thrive, promoting fairness, collaboration, and inclusion.
 - The game's focus on empathy can lead to more ethical business decisions, considering the emotions and well-being of all stakeholders.
- **Building a Human-Centred Society:**
 - The game cultivates a generation of individuals who prioritize understanding and compassion.
 - Empathy fosters responsible social interactions and contributes to societal well-being by encouraging individuals to consider the emotions of others in both personal and professional contexts.



Game 12 :Empathy Bingo

BE Game Designed By: In cooperation with MentorProgramma Friesland (the Dutch partner of Mind the Future).

Game Thematic: Value game

Objectives: Engage participants in activities that promote empathy, kindness, and active listening while creating a fun and interactive environment.

Target Audience:

- VET Students
- HBO Students
- Entrepreneurs
- Mentors, Student mentors and mentees

Implementation Approach

Materials Needed: empathy bingo card, posters, papers, markers

Game Set Up: each participant will have access to the materials needed for the game, posters can be placed on a wall.

Facilitator's role: facilitators should walk around the room to encourage engagement, answer questions, and support interactions.

Key Activities and Games

Icebreaker/Introduction:

- Facilitators briefly explain the importance of empathy when having interactions, the connection between empathy and mentoring and encourage participants to engage with one another.

Rules explanation:

- When the bingo starts, participants will have between 45 minutes and 1hour to complete as many prompts as they can. (The bingo card has 20 prompts in total, a mixture between conversations, writing and other interactive tasks)
- Completion criteria



- complete each task with at least another person or in a group (try to change people for more interactions)
- write people initials on the bingo card for verification.
- participants should use the free space to reflect on their own understanding of empathy and come up with a task
- Calling bingo
 - when a participant completes all tasks, they call out “Bingo!”
 - facilitators will verify by asking for a brief description of the interactions related to the marked squares.

Game time

Wrap Up / Feedback moment

- Gather everyone together and ask for a few volunteers to share their experiences or favorite prompts.

Learning Outcomes

1. **Demonstrate empathy:** participants will demonstrate the ability to understand and acknowledge other people feelings and perspectives by engaging in interactive tasks that promote empathy.
2. **Practice active listening:** participants will effectively use active listening skills during conversations, showing interest and understanding of what others share with them.
3. **Communication skills:** Participants will develop clear communication skills by interacting with different individuals throughout the game.
4. **Build connections:** Participants will strengthen or build new connections by collaborating with peers and diverse groups to complete tasks.



Game 13 :Eyes and Years

BE Game Designed By: In cooperation with Pasaport Pentru Success (the Romanian partner of Mind the Future).

Game Thematic: Value game

Objectives: Engage participants in activities that promote empathy, kindness, and active listening while creating a fun and interactive environment.

Target Audience:

- VET Students
- HBO Students
- Entrepreneurs
- Mentors, Student mentors and mentees

Implementation Approach

Materials Needed: Safe space free of noises and disturbances.

Game Set Up: People should sit on the ground, facing each other in pairs. There should be enough space for the people to feel comfortable, at relevant distance from the other pairs.

Facilitator's role: facilitators should walk around the room to encourage engagement, answer questions, and support interactions. Following the indication, the facilitator will be a timekeeper.

Key Activities and Games

Icebreaker/Introduction:

- Facilitators briefly explain the importance of empathy when having interactions, the connection between empathy and mentoring and encourage participants to engage with one another.
- Add soft background music to create a calming atmosphere.

Rules explanation:

- Participants will be divided into pairs based on randomness or personal choice (decision of the facilitator)



- Activity will start with a **5 minute session of Eye Gazing** - During this time, participants maintain steady eye contact without talking, laughing, or looking away. Encourage them to focus on their partner's eyes and observe any emotions or thoughts that arise.
- Ask participants to hold hands or mirror each other's breathing patterns for a more connected experience.
- After the timer ends, give participants **2-3 minutes to share their experiences** with each other. Prompt questions could include:
 - *"How did you feel during the exercise?"*
 - *"Did you notice any initial discomfort? Did it change over time?"*
 - *"What emotions or thoughts came up while gazing into my eyes?"*

The second part of the activity is built on the trust made within the first part and it is about active listening, about being heard, about focus and authentic relating.

- Assign one of each pair as the "speaker" and the other as the "listener."
 - Encourage participants to share something meaningful yet comfortable for them (e.g., a recent challenge, a happy memory, or their thoughts on a topic like leadership, creativity, empathy).
 - **Step 1: Speaker shares.** The speaker talks for 3 minutes about their chosen topic without interruptions. The listener maintains full attention (no interruptions, no advice, no reactions—just focus).
 - **Step 2: Listener paraphrases.** 2 minutes The listener summarizes what they heard, starting with phrases like:
 - "What I'm hearing is..."
 - "It sounds like you feel..."
 - "Let me see if I got this right: You're saying..."
 - **Step 3: Clarify and reflect.** 2 minutes The speaker confirms or clarifies if the listener understood them correctly. The listener can ask clarifying questions if needed, such as:
 - *"Can you tell me more about how you felt?"*



- *"What was the most challenging part of that experience?"*

- **Step 4:** Switch roles. Repeat the process so each partner experiences both speaking and listening.

Game time

5 Minutes of Eye Gazing

3 minutes of sharing their experiences.

5 minutes for Speaker 1

3 Minutes for Listener to share what was heard

2 Minutes for completing and ulterior questions

5 minutes for Speaker 2

3 Minutes for Listener to share what was heard

2 Minutes for completing and ulterior questions

20 minutes debriefing on the activity

Wrap Up / Feedback moment

- Gather everyone together and ask for a few volunteers to share their experiences or favorite prompts.

Guiding questions for debriefing:

Eye Gazing:



What did you notice when you locked eyes with another person for an extended period?
How did the eye gazing activity make you feel—both physically and emotionally?
Were there moments when it felt uncomfortable or vulnerable? What do you think caused that discomfort?
What did you learn about nonverbal communication through this activity?
How did eye gazing impact your connection with the other person?
Do you think eye contact can create a deeper sense of empathy? Why or why not?
How does maintaining eye contact change the way we perceive and understand others?
How did the eye gazing experience affect your sense of trust or openness with the other participant?

For Empathic Listening:

What was your experience listening empathically to someone without interrupting or offering advice?
How did you feel when someone listened to you with full attention and empathy?
What challenges did you face when trying to listen without judgment or offering solutions?
How did empathic listening affect the quality of the conversation?
What did you notice about your own emotions or thoughts while practicing empathic listening?
How did it feel to be listened to with empathy—did it change your perspective or feelings?
How did you balance listening with trying to understand the emotions of the speaker?
What role do you think empathic listening plays in fostering deeper connections with others?

Reflection on Overall Experience:

Which of these activities did you find most impactful, and why?
Do you think practicing these skills in daily life would improve relationships? How so?
What do you think is the key to truly empathizing with others, based on these activities?
What would you tell others who are hesitant to try these kinds of empathy-building exercises?
How do you plan to apply what you learned from these activities in your everyday interactions?
After participating in these activities, how do you feel about the importance of empathy in human connection?
In what ways do you think these activities can help improve communication and reduce misunderstandings?



Learning Outcomes

Empathy: Developing deeper understanding and connection with others' feelings.

Communication Skills: Improved verbal and nonverbal communication.

Trust and Connection: Building stronger relationships through presence and attentiveness.

Self-Awareness: Reflecting on personal behaviors, emotions, and triggers.

Patience and Focus: Practicing active attention and slowing down interactions.

Nonverbal Communication: Recognizing the importance of eye contact and body language.

Compassion and Tolerance: Fostering a more empathetic, accepting mindset.

Conflict Resolution: Using active listening to manage and resolve conflicts.

Relationship Building: Strengthening interpersonal relationships with empathy.

Emotional Regulation: Managing discomfort and emotional responses during interactions.

1. Overview of Piloting Sessions

Piloting activities were conducted between September and December 2024 across four European partner institutions. Sessions varied from small classroom-based experiments to larger workshops involving mentors, educators, entrepreneurs, and vocational students. The duration of sessions ranged between 1.5 and 3 hours, with total participation exceeding 150 individuals across all partners.

1.1 Netherlands – FIRDA / MentorProgramma Friesland

Venue: Leeuwarden BlokHuisPoort, Firda WillaarderBuren, Firda Cambuur

Event Dates: 30 September, 10 October, 14 October 2024

Games Tested: Empathy Bingo, Walk the Line, DISC Method (Color Game)

Participants: 73 total (mentors, entrepreneurs, educators, MBO and HBO students)

The Netherlands sessions focused on fostering empathy through collaborative learning and role-play. Participants explored emotional diversity and communication patterns through structured reflection and discussions. The DISC Method activity successfully introduced students to behavioral differences and color-based personality frameworks.



While participants expressed enthusiasm and engagement, they recommended allocating more time to link theoretical elements with practice. Overall, the sessions effectively enhanced emotional intelligence and peer collaboration.

1.2 Lithuania – KAUTECH Vocational Training Centre

Venue: Kautech Vocational Training Centre

Event Dates: 10 April and 8 October 2024

Games Tested: Recognizing Differences, Matching Pairs, Empathy Quest

Participants: 44 total

Lithuanian students demonstrated active engagement with empathy-centered exercises. Activities connected to local business leadership scenarios, helping learners identify human motives and community-oriented leadership traits. The long sessions encouraged deeper understanding but challenged students' attention spans. Despite these challenges, feedback showed increased self-awareness, tolerance, and curiosity toward others' perspectives. The piloting confirmed the suitability of BE Games for vocational education when supported by visual aids and shorter timeframes.

1.3 Romania – Pașaport pentru Succes (PPS)

Venue: Conference Room

Event Date: 14 December 2024

Game Tested: The Jackal Bingo

Participants: 7 students

Romanian participants tested the Jackal Bingo, a communication and empathy-based activity rooted in Nonviolent Communication (NVC) principles. The group faced challenges understanding abstract empathy concepts, suggesting the need for clearer visual guidance and more accessible rules. Despite difficulties in identifying winners and results, the session generated valuable insights for refining the game's format and visual presentation. The PPS team highlighted the importance of simplifying game mechanics for broader accessibility.

1.4 Turkey – TED Bursa College

Venue: TED Bursa College Meeting Room

Event Dates: 28 September and 10 October 2024

Games Tested: Empathy Map (Game 2), The Workplace Challenge (Game 6)

Participants: 20 students

Turkish participants explored the link between emotions and behavior through two playbook activities. The Empathy Map game helped students connect thoughts, feelings, and actions, while The Workplace Challenge simulated real-world leadership and teamwork. Learners practiced active listening, emotional regulation, and identifying deceptive or misleading communication patterns within groups. The overall experience improved students' emotional literacy and ability to navigate collaborative environments.



1.5 Spain – Escola Pia Mataró

Venue: Escola Pia Mataró (various classrooms)

Event Dates: October 2024

Games Tested: Mirroring Emotions, Walk the Line, Workplace Challenge

Participants: 45 students (17 + 14 + 14 across different sessions)

The Spanish partner, Escola Pia Mataró, implemented three BE Games focused on empathy, collaboration, and social responsibility. The activities aimed to enhance students' ability to understand different perspectives, recognize emotions, and respond to them appropriately. Participants engaged enthusiastically in role-play and communication-based challenges, which encouraged emotional expression and team cohesion. Feedback collected from students included keywords such as 'fun', 'empathy', 'teamwork', 'understanding', and 'creativity', reflecting high engagement and enjoyment levels. The Mirroring Emotions game strengthened awareness of body language and emotional cues, while Walk the Line promoted open-mindedness and respect for others' opinions. The Workplace Challenge introduced workplace-related problem-solving through playful tasks, emphasizing cooperation and emotional regulation. The sessions demonstrated a strong capacity to connect academic learning with emotional and social intelligence development.

2. Cross-Country Comparative Analysis

Across the four partner countries, the BE Games demonstrated strong adaptability to diverse educational environments. Participants consistently reported increased empathy, understanding of diversity, and teamwork skills. However, certain limitations were noted, such as varying attention spans and the need for visual or digital support materials. Shorter, more dynamic game structures were preferred in formal educational settings, while longer reflective sessions were effective for adult participants. The transnational collaboration allowed partners to share pedagogical insights, refining the BE Games for future European-level implementation.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

The piloting phase confirmed the potential of BE Games as innovative tools for developing empathy, leadership, and intercultural awareness in vocational education. Across all countries, students and educators expressed enthusiasm for experiential methodologies that foster social-emotional learning. The project partners recommend the following actions:

1. Simplify and visually enhance game instructions.
2. Allocate flexible time for debriefing and reflection.
3. Integrate digital or hybrid elements for accessibility.
4. Continue teacher and facilitator training to ensure consistent delivery.

The Mind the Future project successfully aligned with Erasmus+ priorities of inclusion, diversity, and innovation, equipping young people with essential emotional and social competencies for the future workplace.



4. Overview of Extended Piloting Sessions

Between November 2024 and April 2025, the BE Games were implemented in five partner countries through diverse educational contexts — from vocational centers and secondary schools to outdoor sessions and creative workshops. Over 200 participants took part in the extended pilots, exploring how empathy and communication can be trained through structured play. The sessions covered a wide range of BE Games, including Empathy Map, Walk the Line, Matching Pairs, Mirroring Emotions, Workplace Challenge, and Recognizing Differences.

4.1 Netherlands – FIRDA

Venue: Multiple locations across Friesland (Emmeloord, Leeuwarden, Dokkum, Westereen, Amersfoort)

Event Dates: November 2024 – April 2025

Games Tested: Recognizing Differences, Empathy Map, Eyes and Ears, Mirroring Emotions, Empathy Quest, Walk the Line

Participants: 97 students and 8 teachers

FIRDA organized an extensive series of workshops involving diverse groups of students and teachers across several campuses. The activities combined empathy, communication, and leadership training through creative, context-based games. A focus group of StudentsLAB members supported facilitation, allowing rapid scaling of workshops. The sessions promoted emotional reflection and interactivity across unusual environments, including theatres and buses. Quantitative data from student surveys indicated that 68% of participants reported a positive change in how they perceive others, while 82% felt the sessions improved their teamwork and communication. Feedback keywords included 'fun', 'educational', 'creative', and 'empathy'. Challenges included time management, energy levels, and adapting materials to different skill levels. Teacher involvement became a key achievement of this extended phase, with educators now capable of delivering BE Games independently.

4.2 Lithuania – KAUTECH

Venue: Kautech Vocational Training Centre, classroom No. 14

Event Dates: January – February 2025

Games Tested: Recognizing Differences, Empathy Map, Matching Pairs, Walk the Line

Participants: 31 students

KAUTECH continued developing empathy-based learning through a combination of reflection and debate-driven activities. Students explored emotional intelligence and diversity through structured exercises. Extended piloting enabled participants to move beyond basic awareness into self-confidence and emotional openness. Students noted that repeated exposure to the games made them more comfortable sharing personal experiences. Compared to short piloting, the extended sessions improved engagement, understanding, and peer collaboration. Minor challenges included emotional vulnerability and difficulty maintaining trust during sensitive discussions. Overall, the Lithuanian implementation validated BE Games as effective empathy-building tools in vocational education.



4.3 Spain – Escola Pia Mataró

Venue: Escola Pia Mataró (various classrooms)

Event Date: 20 March 2025

Games Tested: Soulmates, Bridge of Empathy, Empathy Bingo

Participants: 30 students

Escola Pia Mataró focused on creating a fun and dynamic learning environment centered on emotional connection and teamwork. Students engaged in cooperative games designed to stimulate kindness, empathy, and quick thinking. The Bridge of Empathy and Soulmates activities encouraged active listening, communication, and adaptability in mixed groups. Feedback included descriptors such as 'funny', 'entertaining', 'teamwork', 'empathy', and 'communication'. Challenges were mainly related to role acceptance and group leadership dynamics, yet the overall experience was highly positive. Compared to short piloting, students showed greater confidence and understanding of the games' objectives, demonstrating that repeated exposure enhances learning outcomes.

4.4 Turkey – TED Bursa College

Venue: TED Bursa College Meeting Room and Classroom

Event Dates: March – April 2025

Games Tested: Empathy Map (Game 2), Workplace Challenge (Game 6)

Participants: 30 students

TED Bursa's extended pilot reinforced empathy, leadership, and communication within real-world team simulations. The Empathy Map activity cultivated emotional awareness by linking thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, while the Workplace Challenge explored leadership and problem-solving through fictional team roles. Students demonstrated stronger collaboration and communication, with survey responses highlighting increased self-awareness and conflict resolution skills. Challenges included managing hesitancy in emotional discussions and clarifying abstract roles. Feedback was mostly positive, with keywords such as 'eye-opening', 'helpful', and 'reflective'. Despite minor disengagement among a few participants, the extended sessions were seen as impactful and practical for classroom application.

4.5 Romania – Pașaport pentru Succes (PPS)

Venue: Parcul Mare, Cluj-Napoca

Event Date: 17 April 2025

Games Tested: Mirroring Emotions, Workplace Challenge, Recognizing Differences

Participants: 20 students

The Romanian extended pilot integrated outdoor experiential learning with emotional reflection. Participants engaged in mirroring exercises and workplace simulations, which fostered awareness of non-verbal communication and emotional expression. Discussions addressed empathy in leadership and inclusivity in professional contexts. Students who had participated in previous short pilots exhibited noticeable growth in emotional openness and confidence. Feedback was highly positive, emphasizing the games' originality and their ability to make 'serious topics fun'. Facilitators observed a deeper understanding of empathy compared to earlier stages, proving that longer, reflective formats significantly strengthen learning impact.



5. Cross-Country Comparative Analysis

The extended piloting phase across five countries demonstrated the scalability and adaptability of BE Games within varied educational and cultural settings. Across all partners, the games effectively cultivated empathy, cooperation, and communication. Common observations included greater engagement, improved trust among participants, and an increased ability to apply empathy beyond classroom settings. Quantitatively, over 200 participants were engaged, with approximately 75% reporting improved understanding of empathy and teamwork. Qualitatively, facilitators noted a stronger emotional maturity, openness, and leadership development compared to the short pilot phase. Recurring challenges included sustaining focus during long sessions and addressing emotional vulnerability in sensitive topics.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The extended piloting confirmed that BE Games can effectively strengthen emotional intelligence, social responsibility, and collaborative learning across diverse contexts. Partners observed that repeated exposure leads to more authentic behavioral change and that facilitator preparedness significantly influences the outcomes. Key recommendations include:

1. Continue integrating BE Games into school and vocational curricula.
2. Provide facilitator training emphasizing emotional safety and inclusion.
3. Develop visual and digital versions of the games to ensure accessibility.
4. Allocate adequate time for reflection and feedback after each session.
5. Strengthen cross-partner exchange of best practices for future dissemination.

Overall, the extended piloting marked a successful advancement of the Mind the Future project, illustrating the transformative potential of empathy-based learning in building inclusive, emotionally intelligent communities.

Final Comprehensive Conclusion –

BE Games Piloting (Short + Extended Phases)

The implementation of the BE Games methodology across two consecutive piloting phases—Short (2024) and Extended (2024–2025)—provided a rich and multilayered understanding of how empathy-based learning can be cultivated within diverse educational contexts across Europe. Through this transnational collaboration, the partner institutions from the Netherlands, Lithuania, Spain, Turkey, and Romania successfully demonstrated that structured play and reflection can serve as powerful pedagogical tools for developing emotional intelligence, communication, and teamwork skills among youth and educators alike.

1. Pedagogical Evolution and Depth of Learning



The transition from the short piloting to the extended phase marked a clear evolution in learning outcomes.

- During the short pilot, activities primarily tested the *structure, clarity, and feasibility* of the BE Games. Partners focused on validating the mechanics of empathy-based exercises, identifying limitations in comprehension, and adjusting facilitation techniques.
- In the extended phase, partners were able to move beyond the mechanical stage toward *deep learning*, reflection, and behavioral change. The longer sessions, larger groups, and improved facilitator training allowed participants to integrate empathy as both a concept and a lived experience.

Repeated exposure to the same or similar games significantly increased participants' emotional confidence, self-expression, and ability to engage in meaningful discussions. Students who had been hesitant during the short pilots became active, collaborative, and self-aware contributors during the extended sessions.

2. Quantitative and Qualitative Impact

Across both phases, the BE Games reached over 350 participants (students, teachers, and community members). Quantitatively, data collected from surveys and facilitator reports indicate that:

- 73–80% of participants reported a measurable improvement in teamwork and communication skills.
- 70% expressed increased understanding of empathy and diversity.
- Over 60% stated that their perception of others had changed positively after the sessions.

Qualitative reflections reinforce these numbers:

- Participants frequently described the activities using keywords such as “*fun*,” “*empathy*,” “*teamwork*,” “*understanding*,” “*creative*,” and “*inclusive*.”
- Teachers noted a visible improvement in peer respect, tolerance, and emotional regulation among students.



- Facilitators observed a greater sense of belonging and collaboration, even in mixed-ability or multicultural settings.

3. Institutional and Cultural Adaptability

A major success factor was the high adaptability of BE Games to different cultural and institutional environments:

- FIRDA (Netherlands) integrated BE Games across multiple campuses and even unconventional spaces like buses and theatres, illustrating their versatility and wide appeal.
- KAUTECH (Lithuania) proved their effectiveness in vocational settings, using empathy games to strengthen practical workplace communication and emotional awareness.
- Escola Pia Mataró (Spain) successfully connected empathy with creativity, theater, and emotional expression, demonstrating how playfulness enhances learning in traditional school settings.
- TED Bursa (Turkey) emphasized leadership, diversity, and emotional literacy, linking empathy training directly to entrepreneurial and teamwork competences.
- Pașaport pentru Succes (Romania) demonstrated how empathy games could thrive in informal and outdoor environments, combining reflection, trust-building, and active learning.

The consistency of results across these diverse contexts highlights the universality of empathy as a transferable, teachable skill across cultures and educational levels.

4. Challenges and Lessons Learned

While both piloting phases achieved strong outcomes, several recurring challenges were identified:

- Time management: Longer activities required better pacing and shorter debriefs for younger audiences.
- Emotional safety: Some participants initially struggled with vulnerability when discussing personal or emotional topics.
- Clarity of roles and instructions: A few games (especially those involving role-play or abstract concepts) required visual aids and simplified facilitation materials.



- Participant diversity: Mixed-ability groups sometimes demanded differentiated approaches to keep engagement consistent.

Each partner addressed these challenges progressively through facilitator training, visual materials, and group debriefs, resulting in smoother implementation during the extended phase.

5. Comparative Insights: Short vs. Extended Phase

Aspect	Short Piloting	Extended Piloting
Objective	Test feasibility & structure	Deepen learning & reflection
Duration	1–2 hours	2–4 hours
Group Size	10–20 participants	20–100 participants
Focus	Game functionality & feedback	Empathy integration, leadership & application
Learning Outcome	Awareness of empathy concepts	Internalization and behavioral application
Facilitator Role	Guidance & observation	Mentorship & co-reflection
Participant Feedback	Curiosity, confusion, enthusiasm	Confidence, openness, emotional maturity

This comparison confirms that extended exposure transforms empathy from a cognitive concept into a practical, emotional skill.

6. Transnational and Strategic Value

The joint implementation fostered robust transnational collaboration, peer learning, and cross-cultural exchange.



- Partners shared insights and adapted each other's games, enhancing the collective quality of the BE Games manual.
- Teacher empowerment emerged as a long-term impact, with several educators independently facilitating empathy workshops after training.
- The project's dissemination potential grew as interest expanded beyond original pilot schools to local communities and professional training centers.

7. Strategic Recommendations

To sustain and expand the project's impact, the consortium recommends:

1. Institutional integration: Include BE Games in educational curricula as tools for emotional and social competence development.
2. Digital transformation: Develop an online interactive version of BE Games for blended or remote environments.
3. Continuous facilitator training: Establish a network of certified BE Games trainers to ensure quality and consistency.
4. Long-term monitoring: Implement longitudinal studies to measure behavioral and academic outcomes over time.
5. Cross-sector collaboration: Extend use of empathy-based games to corporate, NGO, and community leadership programs.

8. Final Reflection

The BE Games initiative proved that empathy, creativity, and emotional intelligence can be systematically nurtured through playful yet structured educational experiences. Both the short and extended piloting phases reinforced the idea that empathy is not an abstract moral principle but a concrete, learnable skill—one that can redefine interpersonal dynamics, professional collaboration, and social inclusion.

Across five countries, hundreds of young people learned not only *how to play together* but also *how to understand one another*. This transformation—observable in classrooms, workplaces, and communities—represents the core achievement of Mind the Future: building a generation equipped with empathy, awareness, and compassion for an interconnected world.