GAMES FOR GOALS

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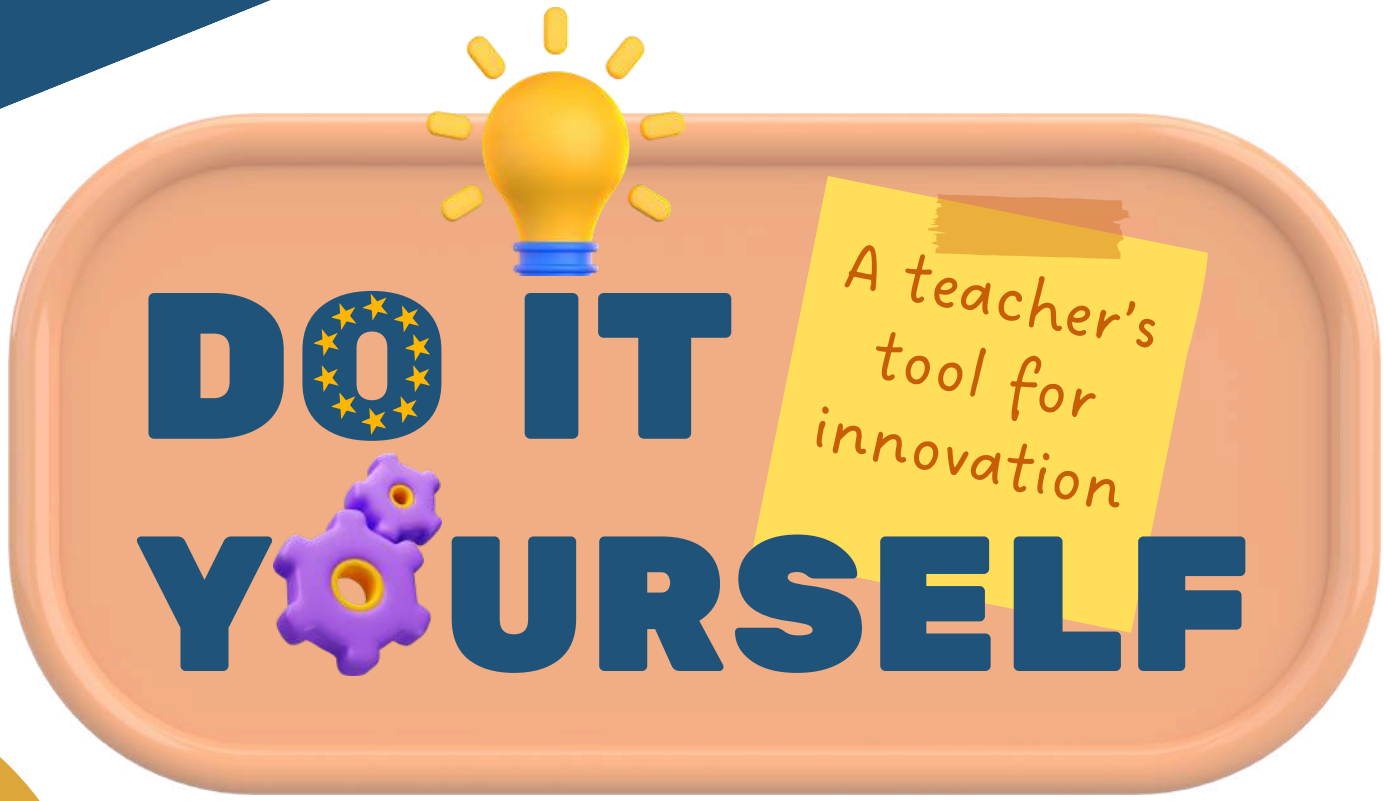

DO IT YOURSELF

A teacher's tool for innovation

Find the empty canvas as a stand-alone document for large-size printing on our website: **gamesforgoals.eu**

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STEDENBAND Haarlem Mutare CITY LINK
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inholland university of applied sciences
ISPGAYA instituto superior politécnico
kurioz

HOW TO MAKE INNOVATIVE GAMES

A teacher's methodology for designing innovative activities for global citizenship and sustainable development in primary education.

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INTRODUCTION

The Games for Goals project

The Games for Goals project, funded by the Erasmus+ EU programme, is a collaboration between NGOs and higher education institutions from five European countries, led by the French NGO Le Partenariat. Running from 2022 to 2025, **it focuses on supporting primary school teachers and educators by promoting innovative teaching practices related to global citizenship and sustainable development**. The project aims to encourage behavioural change toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by providing teachers with print and play educational games, resources, and methodologies for innovative education. Local actors, including teachers and university students, are actively involved in the project.

At the beginning of the Games for Goals project we held a workshop in Poitiers (France) for primary school teachers from Belgium, Portugal, Germany and the Netherlands. **We shared our ideas about innovative education for sustainability** and the teachers advised us on what was important to bear in mind for our age-group. Using this input we designed criteria for three innovative sustainability games for children from 8 -12 and over the following months, together with students from all the consortium countries, we made them! In a nutshell, **our basic criteria were that innovative education needed to be active, transformative and collective** (see below for more details).

This was all very well, but...

... we also wanted to design a methodology that would enable primary school teachers to use the same criteria **to adapt existing materials so they would never have to run out of innovative activities**.
So a year later we held another workshop with the same group of teachers (give or take a few) and together **we designed a tool that we hope is fun and engaging**. One that is made for teachers, by teachers and allows all voices to be heard and stimulates the creation of innovative education for global citizenship.

INTRODUCTION

Global citizenship education

We are inspired by Global Citizenship Education (GCE) that is by nature systemic. **GCE is a teaching practice is focused on fostering positive dialogue and active participation in a global community.** It departs from the idea that since we are interconnected, the actions we take in our own local community also have the potential to affect our region, country and eventually the global community. It thus encourages individuals to contribute to change at local, national, and global levels.

Core values of GCE are recognising the **creative power of collective and diverse intelligence**, active teaching which empowers the learner by placing them at the heart of their learning and encouraging active participation. GCE promotes active citizenship by raising awareness of global issues like equality, human rights, and the environment.

Our aim is to cultivate a supportive learning environment, with hands-on engagement to better understand and address today's challenges so that children can become informed and active global citizens.
As reports grow of children experiencing increasing climate-related anxiety, we hope that our activities can help them to feel more informed and less lonely. **We hope to offer them the experience of collaborating together to make a difference** and encourage them to link the games they play in the classroom to local issues in their school or neighbourhood where they can experience making an impact. Such an experience can result in a behavioural change as they realise that their actions really can make a difference.

INTRODUCTION

Our educational approach

Innovative education

Our activities are all games-based to support **a pedagogy that is playful, holistic, and participative**. By gamifying the SDGs, we make these goals tangible and realistic, thereby fostering active participation and engagement among children. The games offer a wide variety of **activities that cater to the head, heart, and hands**. They also encourage collaborative problem-solving and solidarity amongst children They combine storytelling, arts-based and embodied pedagogies with more traditional cognitive approaches. This diverse methodology ensures a **comprehensive learning experience** and cultivates a supportive and engaging learning environment.

Read more on the next page!

Inclusive education

Inclusive education ensures that all children, regardless of ability or background, can fully participate in learning. This aligns with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which supports the right to inclusive education. The game we have developed have all been tested in European classrooms to refine the design and aim to **address challenges such as reliance on reading and cognitive demands**. That said, we recognise that the print-and-play format has some limitations such as less tangible physical materials and a lack of audio or digital interactivity. To enhance inclusivity, teachers can use frameworks like the UN 4-A and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to **adapt teaching methods and support every child's unique needs**.

INTRODUCTION

Innovative education

Three basic criteria for innovative activities for global citizenship and sustainable development:

Active

Our approach is **games-based, playful** and aims for active engagement and participation. It is inspired by research that shows that it is through **arts-based and embodied** activities, rather than simply cognitive knowledge, that learners become engaged in sustainability challenges. Examples can be recycling projects, local gardening, integrating the SDGs into the everyday curriculum, waste collection or hiking days in the local parks or countryside.

Transformative

Transformative education can be seen as more **holistic** than traditional education, integrating activities for the head, heart and hands. So combining more abstract ideas with issues anchored in real life that children have a strong **emotional** connection with and expressing this in a wide variety of sensual forms. Such as drawing, painting, carpentry, posters, models, drama etc. Integrating this more systemic approach can make the learning experience more **comprehensive, memorable and meaningful**. Such an experience can empower children to become change agents in their own local environments thus triggering a wider positive change.

Collective

We aim to design **inclusive** education so that every child, regardless of their ability, background, or learning needs, can meaningfully participate in learning activities. To that end we have built **participative and convivial** elements into the games to encourage **collaborative** problem-solving and solidarity. The games are not competitive but for their success depend on collaboration and a combining a variety of skills.

INTRODUCTION

Why a canvas? How to navigate it?

Like the SDGs, that approach sustainable development from 17 different angles we recognize that **change needs to happen on many fronts** and that they are often intimately connected. The same applies for education; the values you support (WHAT) will affect choices on WHO you work with and HOW.

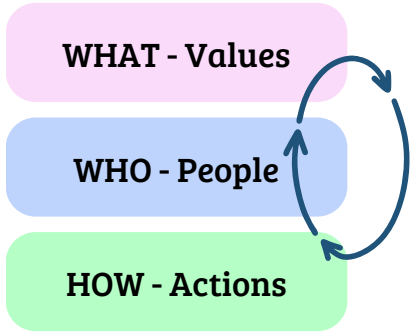
The Canvas is designed to be **systemic rather than linear**, so as a team or an individual you can **approach change from many angles simultaneously**.

We aim to make this an inclusive process in which all voices are heard. So once you have agreed on the values you support collectively, one teacher may be keen to think about which stakeholders to include, whilst another may prefer to add concrete activities. Our experience shows that **this method of co-design creates products that are robust and sustainable**. In this way the exploratory and team-building process of designing innovative education is just as important as the product.

This tool is most productive if used collaboratively within a set time limit. **Decide how much time you will give to each phase and what your outcome will be**.

Recommended total time: minimum 1 hour.

The Canvas is designed so you can explore WHAT, WHO & HOW simultaneously. However, we advise you to reach some agreement as a team on the collective educational ambitions you are aiming for in the classroom before starting.



1. Discuss your ‘pole star’. What are your **shared educational ambitions** for global citizenship education?
2. Choose a **concrete & local sustainability issue** you would like to work on.
3. Familiarise yourselves with the **questions & examples**.
4. Decide who will **focus** on which aspects and for how long.
5. Using the empty Canvas, combine your findings and translate these into **prototype elements for the curriculum** to be tested and improved.

Educational culture in the classroom

- What attitudes will you stimulate?
- How will the activity be inclusive?
- How is neuro-diversity accommodated?
- How can you make it fun?

Children's ownership & choice

What **choices** do children have in:

- how they use the space?
- their role in the group?
- changing roles during the activity?

How **inclusive** is the activity?

- What different skills & talents can the children use?
- How much variety is there in the activities?

How **empowering** is the activity?

- How do the activities empower children?
- Can the lessons learned be transferred to other contexts?

Peer support for children

- How much time do children have to support to each other?
- How can the activity be split into different levels of complexity?
- How can you facilitate peer support between children?

Monitoring progress

- How can children reflect on their own process & products?
- How can they evaluate the activity?
- How can you evaluate/keep track of the process?

Long-term thinking

- How can the activity be connected to other parts of the curriculum?
- What are the long-term objectives?
- How will children use this activity in their future classes?

Local stakeholders

- Which SDGs, including local SDGs, does the activity support?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- How do you plan to involve the community?
- How can the activity relate to the children's experiences outside school?

Peer support for teachers

- What kind of support do you need as a teacher?
- How can you integrate your colleagues' expertise?
- How can the children make an active contribution?
- How does the activity support your own professional development?

Evaluation

- Who is involved in the evaluation?
- How can the evaluation be arts-based?

Teacher's mindset

- What do you need to bear in mind as a teacher?
- how is the activity relevant & engaging?
- how are children affected emotionally by the SDGs?
- how to integrate the 3 aims: active, transformative & collective?

Logistics

- How much time do you need ?
- What type of materials do you need?
- How should you organise the classroom?
- What kinds of tools & methods can you use?

Transformative features

- How multi-disciplinary & holistic is the activity?
- How are head, heart & hand activities combined?
- Which embodied/arts-based activities are there?

Pedagogical values

Final check!

- How active, transformative and collective is the activity?
- How engaging is it for children?
- How is it empowering children to become informed & active global citizens?

HOW TO USE THE TOOL?

Instructions for use

WHAT - Values

Educational culture in the classroom

What are the basic educational principles that your school supports? What is your shared vision and how will you translate this into the practice in the classroom? Think for example of your practices on inclusion and holistic learning.

Teacher's mindset

Consider what this approach demands of you as a teacher. If this way of teaching is a challenge for you, what would you like to be more aware of in your teaching practice? How well do you know the needs & concerns of your class?

Transformative features

See description above on transformative learning. What are you already doing to support this approach and what ideas can you share?

Pedagogical values

Go back to the descriptions of active, transformative and collective education and ask yourself critical questions. Consider ways you could ask the children for feedback to gauge how empowered they feel.

WHO - People

Local stakeholders

Global Citizenship Education encourages an integration of the local community. Think about your local network and how they could be included in activities.

Children's ownership & choice

By giving children more space to personalize their learning and contribute a wider variety of skills & talents, we aim for a deeper engagement and sense of empowerment. How can you integrate this approach into your education?

Peer support for children

Collaboration is key to innovative education. How can you generate and facilitate peer support amongst children?

Monitoring progress

How can innovative education help you to reach your overall goals and how will you monitor the overall process? How can the children help you by becoming more independent in how they reflect on their development?

Long-term thinking

Once again consider your shared educational ambitions for global citizenship education. How will you as a team continue to support each other and provide the children with a coherent and inspiring curriculum?

Peer support for teachers

Without reinventing the wheel, how can you integrate these practices into the classroom? How can you share good practice with colleagues, what is your intrinsic motivation and how can the children help?

Evaluation

Consider alternatives in terms of who is involved (local community?) and how both products & process can be evaluated.

Logistics

Practicalities. Does this teaching approach require changes in time, materials, tools, methods etc.? Consider what you are doing already and how this might be adapted to innovation with a small adjustment.

Educational culture in the classroom

Attitudes
- e.g. curiosity, sharing, respect, courage, care

Neuro-diversity accommodation
- e.g. integrating dyslexic-friendly learning

Children's ownership & choice

What choices do children have?
e.g.
- self-determined learning
- role choice
- workplan for free time
- library in the class
- games in the class
- variety of responsibilities

How inclusive is the activity?
e.g.
- adapt to the context of your class
- know your students (culture, disabilities, relationships etc.)

Peer support for children

Peer support between children?
e.g.
- tutoring
- mediation
- non-violent communication

Monitoring progress

Evaluation:
e.g.
- (visual) portfolio (children)
- logbook/diary (teacher)
- feedback-reflection (in team)

Long-term thinking

- Dedicated time to work by team on a subject
- Positioning time window : long term, short term using outcome for other subjects

Local stakeholders

SDGs
- e.g. make contact with local NGOs.

Community
- e.g. breakfast with parents to share their interests, customs & work

Peer support for teachers

Support as a teacher?
e.g.
- common projects/events/ teaching with other classes

Children's active contribution?
e.g.
- weekly ritual to present findings to other children

Evaluation

Arts-based evaluation?
e.g.
- provide children with variety of materials & an open assignment
- self-managed work

Teacher's mindset

How to integrate the 3 aims: active, transformative & collective?
e.g.
- Keep curious & playful
- Listen to the kids ideas
- Involve parents & local activities
- Think outisde the box

Logistics

Classroom organisation
- e.g. standard teacher-centered set up or other?

Tools & methods
- e.g. Designathon

Transformative features

Embodied activities, e.g. alternative outcomes:
- Short-movie
- Theater/Music
- Presentation (3D, poster, ppt)

Pedagogical values

How active, transformative and collective is the activity?
e.g.
- Know your goal & Plan the session/lessons
- Adapt to the context of your class
- Know your students (culture, disabilities, relationships)

HOW TO USE THE TOOL?

Examples

Workplan for the pupils

The aim is to give children more space to **personalize their learning**.

When they finish a task or have free time they can choose an activity from their own personal work plan. This plan can be **co-created** around sustainability interests with each child and personalized for their own intrinsic interests and needs.

Name:	Date: From to

- ☐ Work on geography presentation
- ☐ Create an artwork on X
- ☑ Study the poem on Y
- ☐ Find somebody to interview on Z
- ☐ ...

Self-managed work

The aim is to encourage children to feel more empowered by **managing their own evaluation process**. This empowerment can then be linked to making a difference in the world.

Children practice subjects as much as they want and ask for help if they need it. When they feel ready they take a test. They can decide when is the right moment and can **take the test as often as they need to**. They can see clearly how they are developing and can also share this at home.

Calculation	Numbers	Grammar
Additions	< 99	Verbs
Substraction	< 999	Subjects
Multiplication	< 9999	...
Division	Fractions	

Collaboration between teachers

The aim of this exercise is for teachers to support each other so they have more time to create (SDG) education based on **their own intrinsic motivation**.

The children stay in their own classroom and the teacher moves then teaches the same subject in each one. So teachers prepare for one subject not three and get to know more pupils. Pupils meet two more teachers so this also helps to **foster a sense of school community**.

	Teacher's own class	2nd class	3rd class
Monday afternoon	History	Geography	English
Tuesday morning	Geography	English	History
Thursday afternoon	English	History	Geography

Library

In this exercise, **children explore and share their own interests and motivation**. This contributes to a deeper sense of engagement.

At the start of the school year, each child brings some (2nd hand) books to school, related to the SDG themes. Each child regularly chooses a book to take home and when they have read it, they bring it back and present to the class what they found most exciting. Teachers can engage the children in inventing different ways to present.

Regular school events

This exercise aims to bring adults & children together around a shared interest and integrate the local community.

Assemblies at school can be programmed once a week/month around a specific SDG theme. Anybody interested in the theme – **adults, children, parents/guardians or local community members** – can participate. They can choose for many forms such as theater, music, presentations, dance etc.

HOW TO USE THE TOOL?

Glossary of terms

A

Autonomy

The ability to make decisions and act on them independently. In a classroom setting, it refers to allowing children to make choices about their learning, which helps develop responsibility and self-confidence.

B

Arts-based

A teaching approach that uses the arts (like music, drama, dance, or visual arts) as a way to support learning in other subjects. It helps children to think creatively and express themselves.

C

Community

A group of people living in the same area or who share common interests. In a school setting, the community includes students, teachers, parents, and others who support and contribute to the school environment.

D

Designathon

A collaborative event where children work together, often in teams, to solve a sustainability problem within a short period of time. It encourages teamwork, creativity, and problem-solving.

>> Designathon Works | Method

E

Dyslexic-friendly

Refers to teaching practices, tools, and resources designed to support children with dyslexia, a learning difference that affects reading and writing. These resources help make learning more accessible for children and avoids possible exclusion by highlighting alternative learning skills.

F

Embodied

Refers to learning experiences that engage the whole body, not just the mind. This can include activities where students move, act, or interact physically, helping to reinforce concepts through hands-on experiences.

G

Head/Heart/Hands

An approach to learning that focuses on three areas: the mind (head) for understanding, the heart for emotions and motivation, and the hands for practical application. It aims to create balanced, well-rounded learning experiences.

H

Holistic

An approach to learning that focuses on three areas: the mind (head) for understanding, the heart for emotions and motivation, and the hands for practical application. It aims to create balanced, well-rounded learning experiences.

I

J

K

L

Lateral thinking

A method of problem-solving that encourages looking at problems from different angles or thinking "outside the box." It helps students approach challenges in creative and unexpected ways.

M

Multi-disciplinary

Using knowledge and skills from different subjects or fields to address a problem or complete a task. For example, a multi-disciplinary project might combine science, art, and maths to teach a specific SDG in a more integrated way.

N

Neuro-diversity

The idea that there are many different ways the brain can work and learn. It emphasizes accepting and supporting people with various neurological conditions, such as autism, ADHD, and dyslexia, as part of natural human diversity.

O

NVC (Nonviolent communication)

A communication method that encourages listening with empathy and speaking with kindness. It helps reduce conflict and promotes understanding by focusing on feelings and needs rather than judgments or criticism.

P

Peer-support

When children help and support each other in their learning. Peer support can involve tutoring, sharing knowledge, or simply being there for each other to build confidence and relationships.

Q

Professional development

Ongoing learning and training that teachers engage in to improve their skills and knowledge. This helps them stay updated on new teaching methods, research, and tools to better support their students.

R

S

SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals)

A set of 17 global goals set by the United Nations to help create a better world by 2030. These goals focus on issues like ending poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring everyone has access to quality education.

Stakeholders

People or groups who have an interest or concern in a particular project or situation. In education, stakeholders include students, teachers, parents, school staff, and the local community.

T

Think outside the box

A phrase used to encourage creative thinking and coming up with solutions that are different from the usual or expected. It helps students be open to new ideas and approaches when solving problems.

U V W X Y Z

Educational culture in the classroom

Children's ownership & choice

Peer support for children

Monitoring progress

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