Training Concept

how to use edu-RPGs in non-formal education

This book presents a ready-made training course
on the usage of RPGs (role-playing games) for education.
Feel free to use and adapt to your liking.
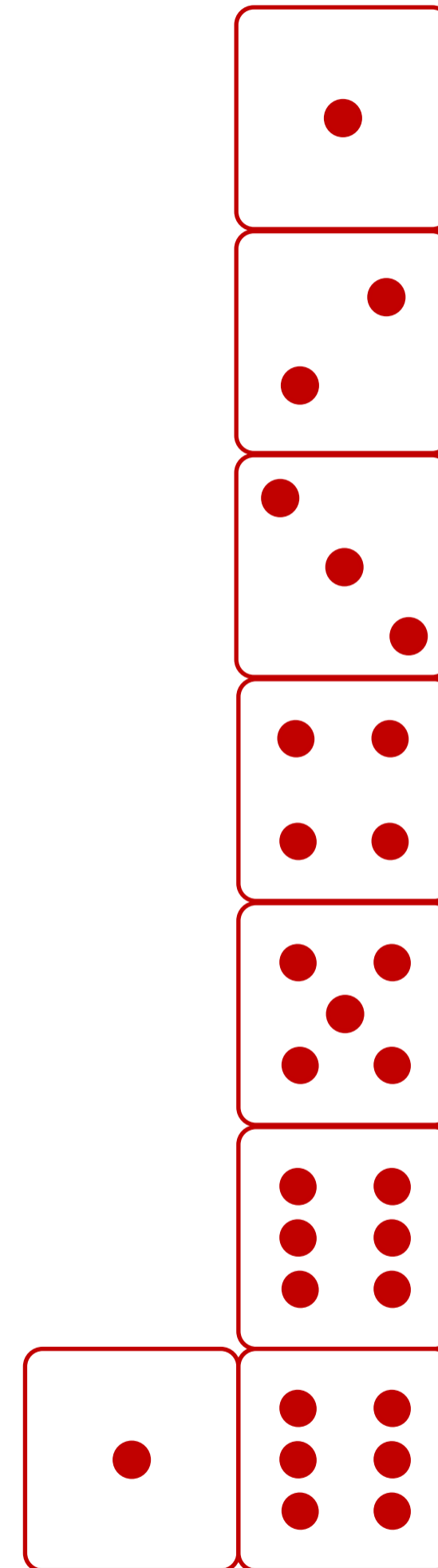
Preface

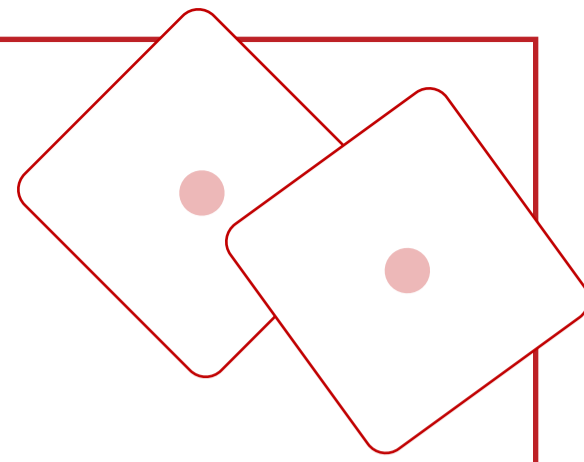Project planning

Format and methodology

Program

Preparation

Implementation

Evaluation

1.
Preface

In this chapter, you will find more about how to use this book and what it is built on.

1.1.
About Role for a Change and this Training Course

The aim of Role for a Change project is to explore RPGs (Role Playing Games) and LARP (Life Action Role Playing) as educational tools and make them accessible to all organisations.

For this reason, the partnership developed a training course on these methodologies and made it available to other professionals and institutions.

This course does not only include plain methods, but also provides further information that will make it easier also for organizations and trainers with fewer experiences to implement the methods.
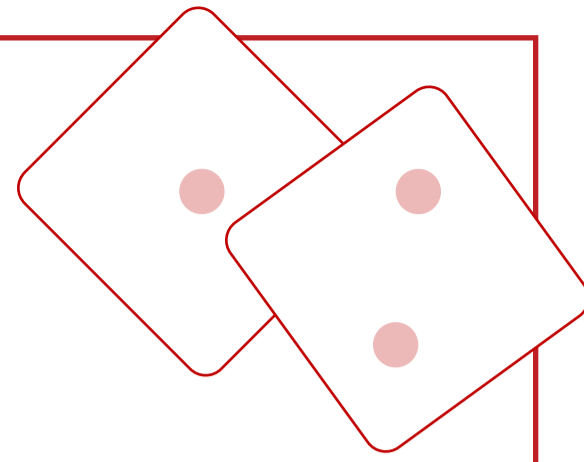
1.2.
How to use this book

In this book, you are going to discover a description of the training course on the usage of Role Playing Games for education we implemented in Orvieto, Italy, from 5th to 11th of September 2022.

It starts with explaining the context and methodologies, continues to practical preparation, documenting the experience and finalises with the reflection of the experience.

If you want, you can take it and recreate it partly or fully to your liking. What can help you is a **Manual** with different RPG activities we created.

1.3.
Intro

RPGs (role-playing games) and **LARP** (Life Action Role Playing) can be seen as containers of individual and community experiences for the development of soft skills, practical skills, critical thinking, empathy and entrepreneurship; tools to create group relationships, to communicate, and to facilitate creativity and thus growth.

Gaming (and thus also RPG and LARP) is an immersive experience in which different aspects of one's personality interact and are mobilised: cognitive, emotional, bodily, relational, existential, situational...

During the Role for a Change training course, we overwhelmingly use **play** as a tool.

The second main tool was **outdoor** - an effective vector of experiential learning. "Practising reality" allows each person to recognize their own ways of participating and collaborating in the achievement of results and to experience others.

The concept of outdoor education is closely associated with that of **experiential pedagogy**, meaning precisely learning outdoors, not physically limited in space and rigidly structured in time.

Outdoor activities and Role Play complement each other and place the pedagogical value **on practical experience as the primary source of learning**. The proposed course provides and guarantees a **high level of physical and psychological safety**: participants will face cooperative games to develop team spirit, sense of responsibility, resilience, and the ability to concentrate and commit to the achievement of a common goal.

The **learnings** from it are numerous. Issues such as self-esteem, personal identity, and the ability to overcome often self-imposed limitations will also be kept in mind. Activities of higher physical engagement in nature are more appropriate here, and help participants become more self-confident, acquire a greater state of equilibrium, be more willing to learn from experience, lend a helping hand to those who are more in need, don't give up in the face of the first obstacles, and commit to a goal.

Play, RPG, LARP and outdoor training activities are the privileged tools of the path. Not play for play's sake, rather replicable games and activities that were designed and structured to meet the relational, expressive and communicative dynamics of the group and to promote acquisition of certain skills.

" Cooperative games are based on teamwork in which participants have to cooperate with each other to fulfil the playful tasks, improving the quality of results with the level of cooperation that is based on mutual help. The practical value of teamwork becomes apparent when conflicts surface in the games consequent to having to make difficult decisions, when there is time pressure, when there are different solution strategies or a lack of commitment by some, valuable learning opportunities in which helping others and letting them help us manifests commitment to them, but also a willingness to recognize one's own limitations by allowing them to help us.[1]

To do this, the proposed methods of conduct are such as to foster an atmosphere of exchange and trust among participants.

The team was composed of professional trainers experienced in managing group dynamics and role playing, and an expert in outdoor training. It was a multidisciplinary team that derives its effectiveness from the real sharing of skills and the interchange between the points of view derived from the different disciplines.

The practitioners placed special attention to communication and language:

" Being aware of the content and relationship that the words we speak carry helps us to create transparent, concrete, linear interpersonal relationships and above all allows us to go beyond appearances, to move from our own point of view to go and understand that of our interlocutor.[2]

- Luigi Infantino, project coordinator

1   Giochi cooperativi contro la violenza a scuola di Valter Sarro, da www.istruzionevenezia.it

2   Cit. articolo https://www.psiconline.it/news-di-psicologia/in-chat-pi-facile.html - Watzlawick, P., Beavin, J. H., & Jackson, D. D. (1971). Pragmatica della comunicazione umana, Astro-labio

2.

Project planning

The project should be tailored to the needs of a target group. Get to know the needs of your participants and adapt the presented course accordingly.
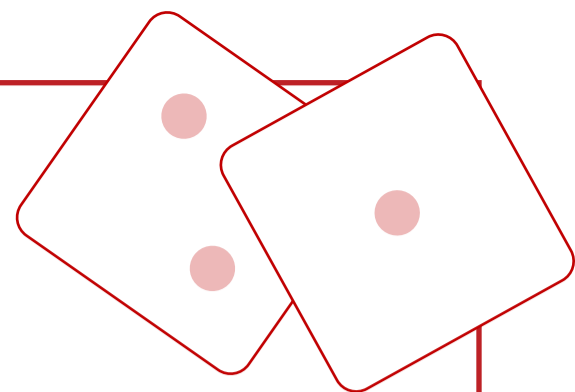
2.1.
Why RPG

This training course was meant to train youth workers[1] in the usage of RPG in education.

Why RPGs?

Because RPGs are a very attractive form of games that can be used in very unique and effective ways (we discuss this in detail in **[Manual]**), and it is not well known in the educational field at this point.

This training was not focused on the creation of edu-RPGs (that would be a specific topic by itself), but on the facilitation of edu-RPGs.

1   What is Youth Work according Council of Europe:
https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/youth-work
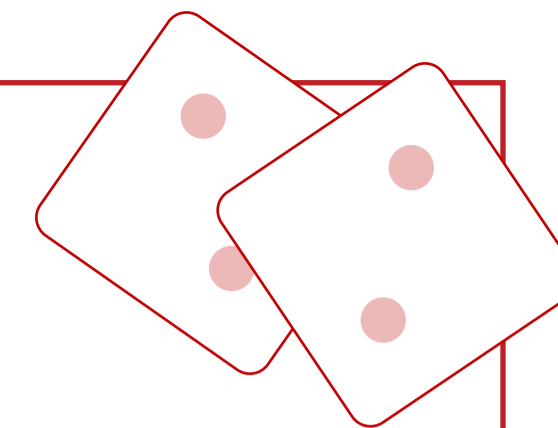
2.3.
Aims and objectives

Aim: To introduce edu-RPGs to educators, and support them in discovering how to use them for educating.

Objectives:

1. To bring 30 youth workers to the activity.
2. To introduce them to the RPGs, and how to use them for education, with the focus on TTRPG[1] and LARP.
3. To experience good practice of edu-RPGs.
4. To practise implementation of edu-RPG activities.

Expected outcomes:

- 30 youth workers equipped with the knowledge of the existence of RPGs and their benefits for education
- Awareness on how to transform a simple RPG into an educational activity.
- Ability to implement an edu-RPG activities.
- Desire to use edu-RPGs for education.
- At least 30 edu-RPG activities implemented by participants of the project, and over 300 youth influenced by the experience.

1   TTRPG or Table-top roleplaying games as Dungeons &
Dragons, World of Darkness, etc. represents a game genre
combinging a board and storytelling games.

3.
Format, methodology

In this chapter, we introduce basic pedagogical concepts forming the foundation of R4CTC. This is not a guide on non-formal education, therefore we are not explaining them in detail, but provide resources for self-studies, should they be needed.
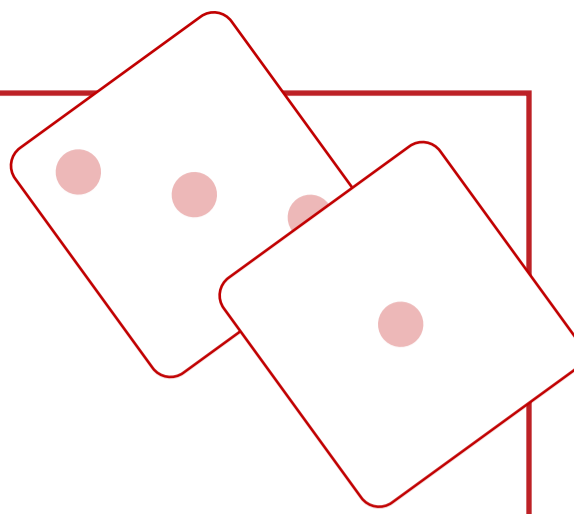
3.1.
Format

The main frame of Role for a Change Training Course was **non-formal education**.[1]

It was based on **peer-to-peer exchange** - trainers were actively creating a learning context to allow the participants to learn from each other and actively share their knowledge and perspectives.

The **format** pays attention to the educational processes of developing knowledge, know-how, attitudes and values. It promotes cooperation, participation and learning through experience. The foundations of this model can be found in pedagogical activism, which is affirmed with theorizations and experiments, especially in the Anglo-Saxon world thanks to scholars such as **John Dewey** and **David A. Kolb**.

The **trainer should act accordingly**. Every phase of work should be preceded by a discussion of the objectives to be achieved, an illustration of the basic rules of the individual activity, and followed by a moment of re-elaboration of the experience.

The proposed activities are fostering a **climate of exchange and trust** among the participants. Each person should have a space to express themselves and co-exist in the group. For that, they need space, time, and a favourable environment.

To this end, various tools and techniques can be used: corporeal, theatrical, outdoor techniques, circle-time, RPG, TTRPG, LARP, games...[2]

Through this model we want to develop opportunities for the participants to become active protagonists, to learn through training, to test and experiment in their own behaviour, to structure and/or improvise (in the sense of seizing opportunities and cues) moments in which "one stops and reflects on" (on the what, how and where one "is").

The training course was happening in an **intercultural context** - there were youth workers from 6 different countries and therefore 6 different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, it was necessary to establish a **safe space** for discovery, learning, self-expression, and mutual understanding.

1   A difference between formal, non-formal and informal education is explained here: https://www.passionineducation.com/types-of-education-formal-informal-non-formal/

2   The didactic/training moment is also associated with play, since one can also learn and grow while having fun, thus recovering the playful dimension of learning typical of children who, precisely because they use fun and positive emotionality, are able to learn much more quickly than adults)
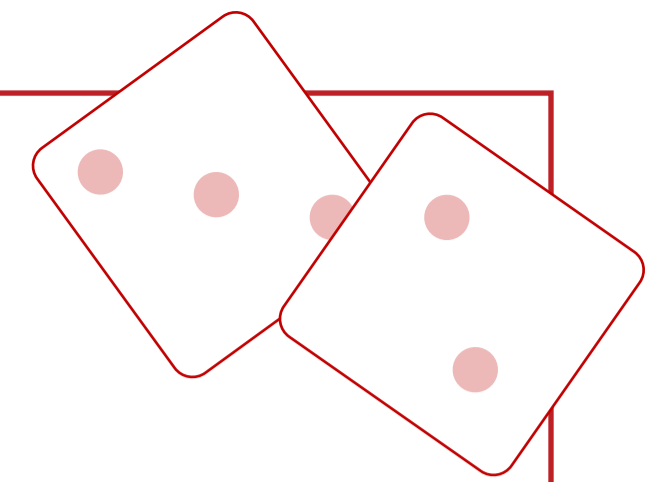
3.2.
Methodology

From the non-formal education, we were using mainly the following methods:

3.2.1.
Main method - RPG

In role-playing games, **players are asked to represent different characters** through their speech, movements, actions, etc. These characters can be:

- **people** (ie. president Trump, Harry Potter, or even a random character like magician, thief, etc.),
- **beings** (ie. wolf, alien, demon…),
- or **phenomenons** (ie. love, death…),

Usually, this happens in a specific situation and the character has a specific motivation:

Ie. President Trump is meeting Death coming to take him to the afterlife. While death wants to take Trump to nirvana, Trump isn't ready to die and is attempting to cheat death by pretending that he is someone else and that death is mistaken.

Role play can have many different forms, and very often is close to social theatre. Not every form of role play, however, qualifies as a role-playing game. Role-playing games **need to include an element of game** to be qualified as such.

In social theatre, there is a certain collaborative effect where people are working under directors or facilitators guidance.

In games, players are given a specific playground where they can do what they want within given boundaries (rules).

So in a role-playing game, when they are acting out a drug dealer, they can be playing in a much more flexible way than if they were collaborating towards a specific theatre performance. It is both a game and a very unique, and unpredictable experience with a number of insightful learnings hidden inside.
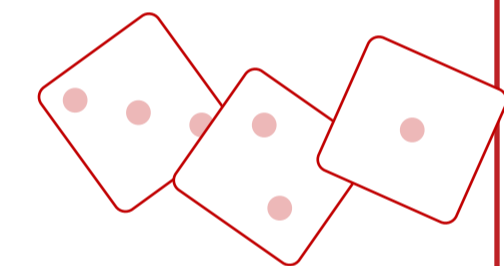
RPG has a 4 main forms

- **TTRPG** aka **Table-Top Role-Playing Games**
  (storytelling games close to board games)
- **LARP**
- **Computer games**
- **Combined** (mostly LARPs and TTRPG played online,
  or MMORPG - Massive Multiplayer Online Role-
  -Playing Games like World of Warcraft)

In this training, we focused on the first two categories.

The **benefits of role-playing games and its usage** are discussed in length in our **Booklet**.

You can also dive into the topics thanks to our **webinars** in which we are explaining:

1. What is RPG/LARP and how to use it
2. Non-formal education and RPG/LARP
3. How to facilitate edu-RPG/LARP
4. How to use RPG/LARP online

Role for a Change
Webinars

3.2.2.
Supporting methods

1. Ice-breakers
Short activities with the purpose to "break" the barriers in interpersonal relationships, and support communication and interaction in a newly established group. Through an informal, relaxed atmosphere, we are motivating participants to proactivity, and to overcome shyness and obstacles in communication.

In ice-breakers, we can usually recognize:

- **Get-to-know-each-other activities**
  (name games, learning about each other, etc.)
- **Team-work and cooperation activities**
- **Trust-building activities** (free fall activities, etc.)

2. Reflections
This is a crucial part of non-formal education: allowing participants to STOP, LOOK BACK on what actually happened during the activities, identify (name) their LEARNING from it, and APPLY it in their life.

Reflection does not need to be present in all contexts of non-formal education, but it is strongly encouraged because it enriches and enhances the learning process.[1]

3. Energizers
The purpose of energizers is to invigorate the participants, especially if they are tired, not focused, bored, etc. It is good to use them at the beginning of a program, or after calmer activities. It can also lighten the mood, if needed.

4. Presentations
Passing information to listeners through prepared materials. Useful when we want to introduce new information about a topic, statistics, or important experiences.

In Role for a Change Training Course, this was useful to introduce the background of Role for a Change project, and our findings about edu-RPGs so far.

5. Group work
This approach is built on premises that participants are able to handle many things on their own. Participants are divided in smaller groups, all of them are getting the same or similar assignment which they have to fulfil and present afterwards.

In our case, group work was used for creation of unique edu-RPG activities on day 3, and the presentation was done by playing the games on day 4.

6. Outdoor education[2]
Outdoor education is an experiential learning approach. It offers adventures and challenges to push through participant's developmental barriers. The nature of outdoor education activities force participants to involve their whole bodies, not just voice and minds. Therefore, outdoor education is more engaging.

In addition, many of these methods can be interlinked or blended, and it was a case also in Role for a Change (as will be explained in the next chapter).

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1   For deeper studies on the concept, you can read more about Kolb's Learning Cycle. I.e. here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rycjUldMl3k&t=52s

2   Humberstone, Barbara. 2006. Non-formal education through outdoor education in Europe. https://www.aca-demia.edu/1461926/Non_formal_education_through_out-door_education_in_Europe

4.

Program

In this chapter, we explain how we planned the program. Keep in mind that the plan and the reality can differ. It is always necessary to adapt to the participants' needs.

The program plan is your map. The path you are going to take to reach your destination depends on the weather, accidents on the journey, whims, desires, needs.

Keep it in mind. As a good leader, you need to be flexible and listen to the needs of your participants.

|	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7
	arrival	*teambuilding, intro to RPGs*	*edu-RPGs*	*preparing edu-RPGs*	*implementing edu-RPGs*	*closing*	*departure*
	breakfast						
AM		Opening activity, Morning circle	Morning circle	Morning circle	Morning circle	Morning circle	
		Presentation	TTRPG: Lasers&Feelings	Division of groups	edu-RPGs prep 1	sharing	
		Team-building/Theatre games 1		edu-RPGs prep 1	edu-RPGs: A>D B>E C>F	Youthpass sessions	
			Reflection of TTRPG				
	lunch						
PM	registration, paperwork	Team-building/Theatre games 2	The Titan has fallen / A Mosque in Sleepyville	edu-RPGs prep 2	edu-RPGs: D>B E>C F>A	Planning of local edu-RPGs	
		Dragon Egg				presentation of local plans	
						E+ opportunities	
		Reflection groups	Reflection groups		Group reflection	Closing process	
	dinner						
night	name games	intercultural night	karaoke night	voluntary group work	celebration	barbeque	
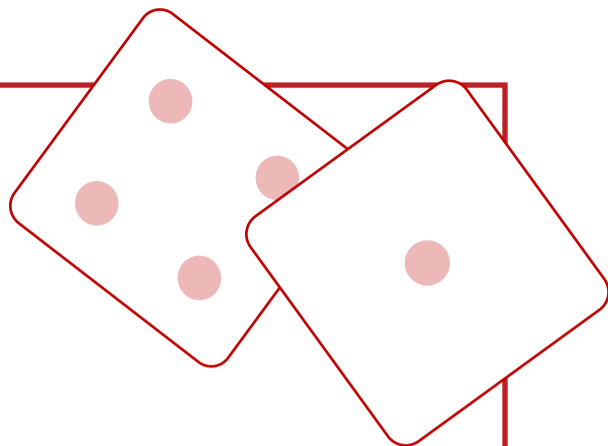
Day 1
arrival

The arrival day is all about landing. Getting to know the place, the rules, the people around you...

Apart from accommodating people, and going through the necessary administration, it might be clever to provide a semi-formal space for games to let people get to know each other.

There are a number of name games. Use the one you like, let the participants propose theirs, or get inspired here:

www.ultimatecampresource.com/ice-breakers/name-games/
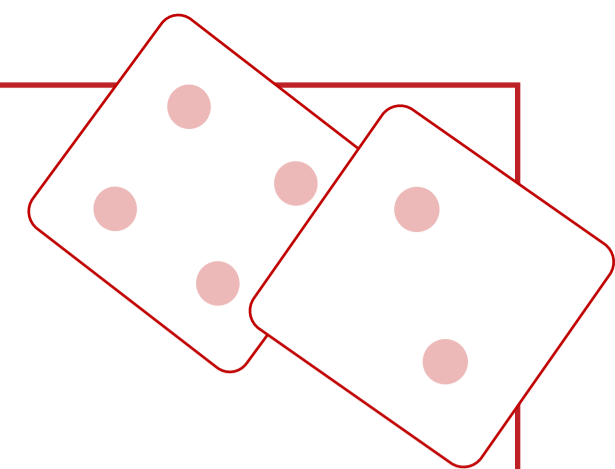
Day 2
teambuilding, intro to RPGs

This is the first official day of the program. While in the previous day, activities were running mostly in an informal spirit, at this point we are slowly establishing a certain culture.

Following the stages of group dynamic (based on Bruce Tuckman): this is the time when a group is being **formed**. This is the time when they need to be given common grounds. To be reminded what the project is about, what are its goals, principles, etc.

- The group might be given some time to form their own rules.
- If you have any hard, unbreakable rules, this is the moment to share or remind them.

A bigger portion of the day should be dedicated to forming a connection and team building. Creating trust. People who trust each other are feeling safer and are much more effective in cooperation.

The flow we propose is following:

Opening activity

You can open a program with an interactive activity where people immediately need to do something. It provides a sense of involvement, plus allows the facilitator to observe the behaviours of participants and form the first observations that might come handy later.

The proposed activity is **Remember the Name(s)**.

Alternatively, you can switch the *Opening activity* with the *Morning circle*.

Morning circle

A format where you meet all the participants in a circle and give them space for an open sharing.

The sharing can be focused on many things, here are a few propositions:

- **Practicals** - the space to address any questions or problems related to practicals, like food, cold at night, etc.
- **Learnings** - the space to share about learnings from the previous days, as well as setting up a learning focus for a day (ie.: *"Today, I would like to discover more about how to design my own edu-RPGs."*)
- **Intentions** - the possibility to help people with their personal development (ie.: *"Today, I will spend at least 30 minutes journaling."*)
- … and many other options.

It is useful to use a **talking stone** - an object (ie.: a tennis ball) - which is sent around a circle. The one who holds it has an opportunity to speak. If they don't want to share (or have nothing to address), they pass the stone further.

It can also come handy to employ principles of **Way of Council**[1] in the Morning circle, and/or principles of **Nonviolent communication**[2], if people are at least partly familiar with them.

Morning circle is a useful tool for meeting everybody at the same spot, starting the day together, passing important information, addressing things that need to be addressed in front of the whole group, and working on a community spirit. If done well, it provides a feeling of togetherness, empathy, and connection.

Presentation

In the presentation, the facilitator is passing all crucial info about the project and its context, including the practicals, to the participants. This helps establish a common ground for the participants.

Use **visual materials** - flipcharts and graphic facilitation skills are definitely helpful.

Through interactive presentation, be sure participants understand the following:

- Formal/non-formal/informal contexts in education/ learning
- Principles of game
- What is RPG

Consult our **Manual** and **Webinars** if you don't know the answers yourself.

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1 https://jinjicounseling.com/the-way-of-council-practice/
2 https://baynvc.org/basics-of-nonviolent-communication/

Team Building/theatre games

In this phase, we divided the group into 2 smaller groups of 15 people. This allowed us to work with them more easily.

- The 1st group was focused on team-building activities.
- The 2nd group had a chance to get to know different role-playing activities (not RPGs yet).

In the afternoon, the groups switched places.

You can choose team-building and RPGs activities of your liking, but these are the ones we propose for you.

Teambuilding activities

- Flying circle
- Two-way rescue
- Falling circle
- Spider's web
- Acid river
- Flip the Raft
- Removal of Diamond
- Who are I? Albert Jacquard

Role playing activities

- Mice, and cats
- Props
- I give you Holy Grail
- Fairy tales scenes
- Speedlarp

Dragon Egg

If you handle team building and theatre activities well timewise, you have a good opportunity to let participants have their **first RPG experience**.

We chose Dragon Egg because it is a very gamistic LARP with simple mechanics.

It is based on diplomacy, negotiation-based games which could be easily done without the role-playing element, but the role-playing aspect offers a very lovely space for playing, enjoyment, and a quick peek behind the curtain of LARP without going straight away into demanding roles.

The roles are defined just by a few lines and they are giving players a chance to decide for themselves how deep they want to go into the role.

Reflection group

Reflection is an important part of the learning process. It provides a look back on what happened and allows people to identify some learning they can carry from it for life (vide **Kolb's Learning Cycle**).

We were doing reflection immediately after most of the activities, but at the end of the day, it is also good to zoom out a little bit and take a look at the whole day's experience.

There are many ways of doing reflection, and most probably you have your own approaches. If you feel you would like **to learn more about it**, you can consult, for example, the booklet IN-LEARNING.

Further on, we are presenting our approach to reflection. **Reflection groups** served as a monitoring system with several purposes:

- Support participants with **anchoring their learning**
- Create a safe, intimate space for **sharing emotions** and offering support to each other
- Gather **feedback** for organisers on what is working/ not working

In an **intercultural setting with adults**, it can be wise to form reflection groups where there is a maximum of 2 people from the same country.

Participants formed **6 reflection groups of 5 people** that were to meet almost every evening. They chose a comfortable spot in the venue and had **1 hour to talk**.

In the first reflection group meeting, it was important to support participants in creating connection, therefore we gave them following instructions:

"Each of you answer the following questions:

1) My name is... and you should know about me...
2) You can support me daily by...
3) Today, what wasn't working for me is...
4) Today, what was working for me is..."

We also asked every reflection team to write on paper a **summary** of what was and wasn't working for people (**anonymous**, without mentioning who said what) and pass it to facilitators, so we could review the feedback and adjust the following days based on participants' needs.

Intercultural night

Evening program is up to you. We would recommend leaving it as a voluntary part of the program so people who feel they need extra rest have the space for it.

On the other hand, it is worth considering to offer participants some program, otherwise they might start to get inventive and too much inventiveness can lead to unpleasant accidents and people with hangovers.

Intercultural nights have become a tradition of Erasmus+ projects. Participants very often expect them to happen.

During the intercultural evening, participants from different parts of Europe can **share their traditions** as well as satisfy their curiosity about the other cultures: it is an activity in which participants present their country, their city, their traditions through songs, dances, local flavours and traditional games but also, and above all, express and present themselves.

During the intercultural evening of the training, participants could wear traditional clothes of their own country, play music (several musical instruments were made available), propose games, taste and drink local specialities but also cook (simple and quick to prepare dishes) or tell stories around the fire.

It might come handy to give some **guidelines** to the participants about what the event should looke like, and provide a **facilitator** of the event (facilitation can be done also by participants, but unskilled facilitation usually leads to less-than-ideal experiences).

Some ideas of tasks that can be given to participants:

- Limit your presentation to 10 minutes (especially if there are more than 5 countries present)
- Prepare national food and drinks
- Prepare a Kahoot quiz about your country
- Teach others a national dance/song
- Play national game
- Make it interactive (so that others can actively participate)
- Act out a part of the national history or a legend

Day 3
edu-RPGs

On day 2, participants got to know each other, created basic relationships, understood some theoretical basis of edu-RPG and experienced their first LARP.

On the second day, there is an opportunity to experience the **edu- part of edu-RPGs** more deeply.

On the level of **group dynamic[1],** the participants are probably still in the "**forming**" stage, even though it might happen the group already experienced the "**storming**" (especially in team-building activities), and through intercultural night got into the "**norming**".

Keeping a certain flow of activities will help to get the group to the "**norming**" stage, or keep it there. Some things - like the morning circle, and reflection groups - are becoming a ritual. It provides a feeling of safety, and knowing what is coming.

It is time to delve deeper into edu-RPGs topic. We propose to dedicate the morning to a TTRPG experience, and the afternoon to a LARP experience.

Energizer

If participants are still sleepy, low-energy, etc., it might be needed to wake them up with morning stretching, body-movement exercise, or a dynamic energizer of your choice.

Morning circle

If you have any practical announcements, this is your moment. It might be also clever to give participants an overview of what is in front of them that day.

In the morning circle, we recommend to run 2 rounds:

1. Is there anything practical you would like to address?
2. What did you learn yesterday that you definitely want to apply today?

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1   You can read more about Tuckman's stages of group development here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuckman%27s_stages_of_group_development

TTRPG

The point of this activity is to let people practise and/or experience how they can be using TTRPG for education.

It needs to be done in **smaller groups**, and if you don't have enough facilitators, you will need to involve some of the participants as Game Masters[2].

In other words, without a sufficient number of facilitators, you can only do this activity if you have participants who are already familiar with the concept of TTRPGs well enough, who ideally already have experiences as Game Masters and who are willing to take this role.

As a system, we chose **Lasers & Feelings**, because it is a very easy, fast system that can be quickly learned and applied. There are many variations, so you can choose a system of your liking.

The whole process of this activity as we planned it is explained here.

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2   Game Master is name for facilitator of the TTRPG.

LARP

For the afternoon, the participants can enter the deeper LARP experience. Proper facilitation of the learning process is your task this time. You can see useful tips on how to do it in our webinar no. 3.

The selection of LARP is up to you. Bring your own, choose a fitting LARP from here, or get inspired by the LARPs we are offering.

You might need to divide the group into smaller teams based on the quantity of people available for the LARP you are going to play.

- The Titan has fallen (can be played both as a LARP and as a TTRPG)
- Mosque in Sleepyville

How to facilitate edu-RP/LARP
webinar

Click to watch webinar

Reflection group

We gave following questions to the reflection groups:

1. *How do you feel right now? Is there any support you need?*
2. *What have you learned today?*
3. *What was working/not working for you today?*

Evening program

On the second evening, we hosted a karaoke night.

If you have instruments, it is a great opportunity for group singing. It might be useful to provide song-books to the people, otherwise it might be challenging for them to find songs they can all sing and enjoy together.

Day 4
preparing edu-RPGs

Now, participants already have first-hand experience with RPGs and their usage for education. They might have an idea of how to use them, now it is about time they actually practise its usage.

It is a space for **group work** - participants should be divided into international groups and prepare activities for each other.

The groups will probably enter, or fall back into a **storming phase**. All disagreements, problems, differences, etc. are going to pop up. It can be challenging and chaotic, but there is a huge learning in going through storms.

Logistic of the day is very simple.

Participants will create **6 working teams**: A, B, C, D, E, and F. They know that the next day, they are to organize an edu-RPG for one of the other teams in the followig way:

In the **morning**, teams have **2.5 hours** to implement an activity: **A for D, B for E, C for F**.

In the **afternoon**, teams have **2.5 hours** to implement an activity: **D for B, E for C, and F for A**.

(To avoid "revenge-factor", the teams should not organize the activities for each other.)

That also means that you will need **3 different playing spaces** for the next day. You can leave it up to teams to make agreements on who will be where.

All teams should have a **plan for the following stages**:

0. Preparation
1. Meeting people, landing
2. Explaining rules
3. Game itself
4. Debriefing of the game (learning part for players)
5. Feedback from players to organizers

This all needs to happen within 2.5 hours, and it is the responsibility of the group to keep the deadline.

There should be 1 **organiser present at every implemented activity** to guarantee the safety of the process, to observe, and to provide an educated feedback to the organisers.

Energizer

If participants are still sleepy, low-energy, etc., it might be needed to wake them up with morning stretching, body-movement exercise, or dynamic energizer of your choice.

Morning circle

If you have any practical announcements, this is your moment. It might be also clever to give participants an overview of what is in front of them that day.

In the morning circle, we recommend to run 2 rounds:

1. *Is there anything practical you would like to address?*
2. *Share one idea on how to use RPGs for education.*

Division of group

There are many ways you can divide a group. We propose the following:

1. Each participant writes on the paper to what educational topic they would like to pay attention.
2. Participants have 10 minutes to mingle, share their topics and form 6 groups of 5 people.

Group work

This is a whole day process with many phases which you can adjust to your liking, based on your experiences. We propose the following:

Team-building in working groups

If you want to make the process smoother, advise them to begin with team-building.

Give them **15-30 minutes** to play Falling circle or other game that might support them.

Why

Each team has **30 minutes** to discuss why the learning topic they have chosen is important for them, and prepare the elevator pitch[1] (1 min speech) on that.

Then, all teams are to present in front of each other.

Getting very clear on why they are busy with the topic they have chosen will allow the group to be aligned in what they are doing.

Selection of RPGs

The teams should have a chance to select a game they want to implement.

You can offer this database to them again.

If you have very experienced teams, you can also suggest them to create their own edu-RPGs. For that, you can offer them this template to support them.

Group process

Group process continues the whole day. As organizers, you should be walking around the working teams, and provide mentoring.

It is also clever to agree on checkpoints in time with all teams to see how the process is going, if there is any extra support needed, and to give teams chances to pass information among themselves (ie. where each team is going to play; if players needs to bring some extra materials, etc.).

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1   If you don't know what the elevator pitch is, take a look here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elevator_pitch

Reflection groups

It might be worth considering to skip the reflection groups this day to avoid breaking the flow of the process.

Evening program

Organizing any extra activities in the evening might not be the best idea this day. Many teams still might be working on preparation of their activities.

Mage test
RPG

During the R4CTC, participants created a game called Mage Test.

We hope you are going to like it as much as we do.

Day 5
implementing edu-RPGs

The flow of the day 5 should be clear. Yesterday, the participants (hopefully) overcame the storming, and entered the **performing phase**.

The most important elements of the day are **SAFETY** and **TIME**.

As facilitators, be sure that nothing dangerous is going on, provide emotional support to participants, and keep an eye on time to avoid the avalanche effect of delays.

Since there should be three stages running in parallel, you need to **coordinate well with your co-facilitators**, and keep smooth communication in between each other.

The most important part of the day will be the evening reflection with the whole group, but let's not get ahead of ourselves.

It is useful to open the day with a morning circle, and apart of the practical round, you can have a 2nd round for the following question:

"How can I support my players the most?"

After the morning and afternoon session, we are entering the reflection phase.

Group reflection

First, send people to their reflection groups to answer the following questions:

1. How do I feel right now? Is there any support I need?
2. How did I enjoy the RPG I was playing?
3. What are my learnings from the game I played?
4. What are my learnings from the group work?
5. What are my learnings from implementing the game?

(You can also ask reflection groups to give you a paper with anonymous feedback on what was working for them so far, and what wasn't working.)

After 30-45 minutes, invite all groups to a big circle for a group sharing. Give them the a "talking stone" and the question:

"What is the potential you see in RPGs for education?"

Make a space for open sharing, discussion, and mutual inspiration.

Evening program

Participants have now gone through an intensive experience. They probably need to release some steam. This is an opportunity for a big celebration of successes and informal fun.

Day 6
closing

The whole day is about tying loose ends, closing the experience, planning the dissemination of the learning, saying goodbye and preparing for departure.

Sharing

You can open the day with the practical round of the morning circle. It is also an opportunity to inform the group about all the important logistical aspects of the day (printing tickets, if needed, cleaning, etc.).

In the second round, it is a space for sharing. It is a time when (hopefully) everybody will be ready to speak in front of the whole group once they receive the talking stone.

The proposed questions is:

- *This project brought me…*
- *I see the following opportunities in edu-RPGs…*
- *I am grateful for…*

Choose one, or bring your own question.

You should give this process as much time as necessary, possible with a short break in between.

When the sharing is over, you can provide a summary of the most important learning from the whole project.

Youthpass session

Even now, not everybody is familiar with the Youthpass.[1]

If you haven't introduced the Youthpass yet, you should do it now. You can do it in a following way:

- Explain the Youthpass, if necessary.
- Create 6 groups of 5 people.
- In each group, the team has 5 min to brainstorm what they have learned from a specific competence.
- After each 5 min, every group has to share out loud 1 of their learnings.

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1   For more info on Youthpass, see: https://www.youthpass.eu/en/help/faqs/keycompetences/

Planning of local edu-RPGs

Make a space for participants from the same countries to meet and make a concrete plan on when and how they are going to implement an edu-RPG on a local level. Doing it once increases the chance they will feel compelled to do it again. It's just like throwing a small stone down a mountain; once thrown, even that small stone can create an avalanche.

Give the national teams 1 hour to meet and discuss the following aspects:

- Who is their target group? Who will be the players?
- What are their needs, and based on that, which edu-RPG will suit them the most?
- Where and when could it happen?
- What are the practical arrangements?
- How will you attract the players, and how will you communicate with them?

Ask them to plan it **as specifically as possible** (with exact dates, numbers, etc.).

Give them flipchart paper and markers so they can prepare a **visual presentation** of their plan.

After one hour, all teams will meet, and every one of them will have **3 minutes to present**, and listeners will have **2 minutes to ask supportive questions**.

This is also the moment when the national team can ask the rest of the participants for any support possible.

Evaluation

Evaluation might be very important for you if you care about getting better. It will help you to identify both your successes, as well as the space for improvements.

It might be useful to send your participants an online evaluation form afterwards, but you can also use some on-site approaches. Ours is presented in the next chapter.

E+ opportunities

Not everybody who is taking part in Erasmus+ projects has a good overview of everything that is possible under the Erasmus+. That's why we like to offer a short presentation on different opportunities: ESC, KA1 opportunities, Erasmus for young entrepreneurs, etc.
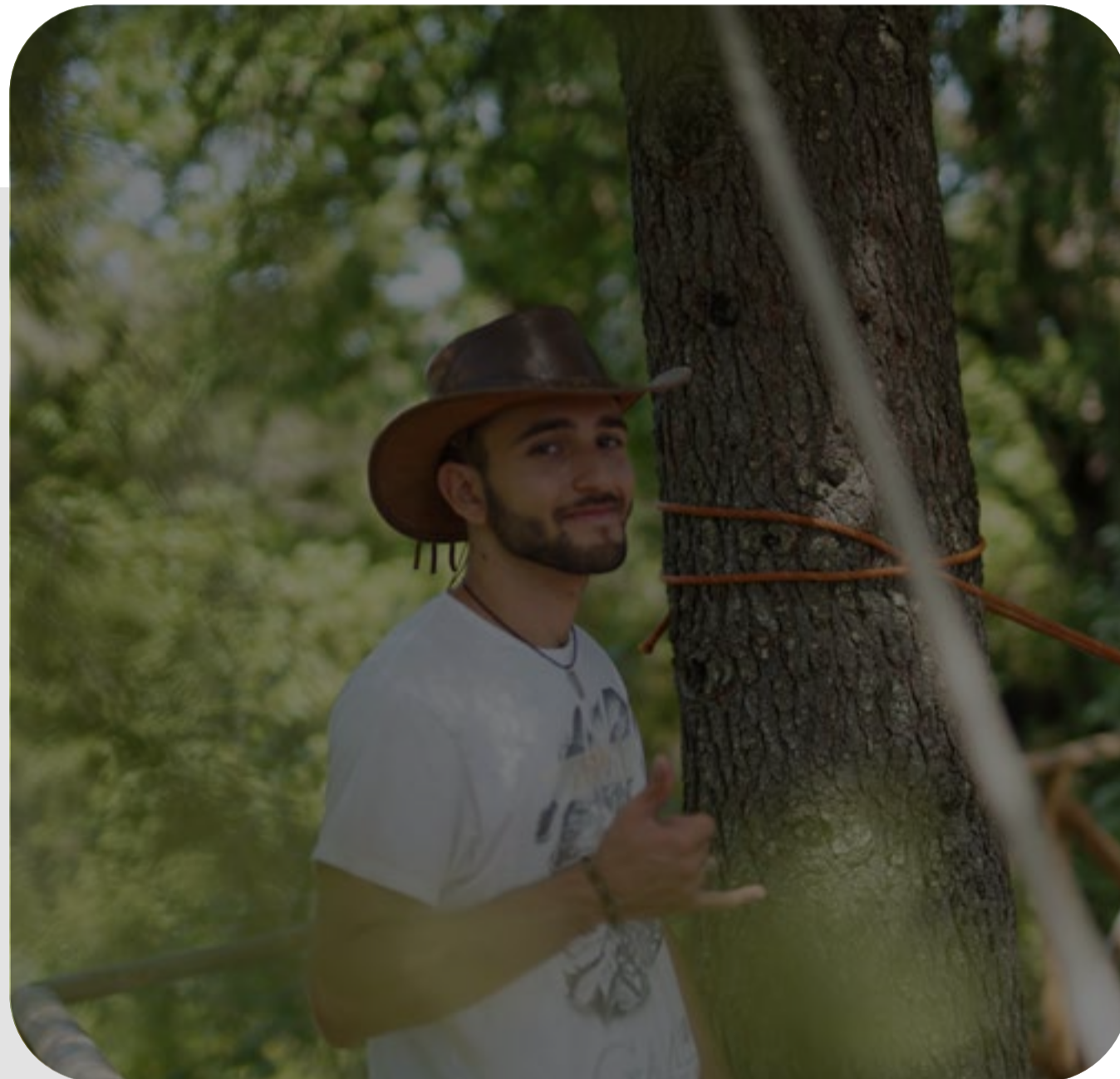
You can do it in an interactive way:

Make 5 small groups, let them discuss the following E+ opportunities, and ask you questions if they don't know something:

- Youth exchanges
- Training courses
- ESC
- Solidarity projects
- …

Closing

Closing needs to be chosen based on the state of the group. For inspiration, we propose the Golden Corridor.

5.
Preparation

In this chapter, we address some important questions regarding the logistics when preparing for the program.

Preparation comes after planning and before the implementation of the event itself. It is anything connected to the practical preparation of the event.

The information in this chapter is tailored to the plan we presented in this booklet. However, since the plan needs to be flexibly adjusted to your context and to the needs of the group, also the preparation will have to be adjusted.
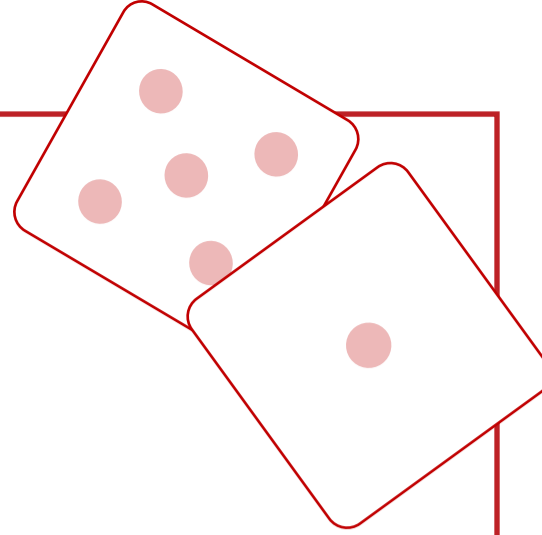
5.1.
Milestones

The main milestones of R4C TC preparation were the following:

1. Making an infoletter and application form

Infoletter is a material for potential participants, where they learn all the important information about the training course (where, when, for how many people, what countries, travel conditions, etc.). You can see it here.

The infoletter also includes the **application form** – a centralised document collecting info about all participants (or applicants), including

- **Basic information** (name, date of birth, etc., connected to the bureaucracy of Erasmus+ projects)
- **Background** (experiences with youth work, info about its target group…)
- **Individual needs** (allergies, health problems, diets…)
- **Motivation** to join the project (it helps both the trainers and the participants. The trainers get better awareness of what are the learning needs of their participants, the participants get better awareness of their individual learning goals).
- **GDPR** related information (agreement to be in photos etc.)

Our application form is here.

2. Selecting participants

The selection of participants was the responsibility of partners of R4C. In the ideal case, the partner knew the participants personally, and had a talk with them about the project.

To centralise the communication, the **production manager** was sending important information to all selected participants afterwards.

3. Preparation for a project

Partners were responsible for their national groups. They were to prepare them for an intercultural experience, support them with getting their travel tickets, insurance, etc. The production manager helped with the coordination of arrivals.

4. Project management

In the meantime, the project manager had to handle everything connected to the finances, renting the venue, arranging the catering, materials for the project, etc.
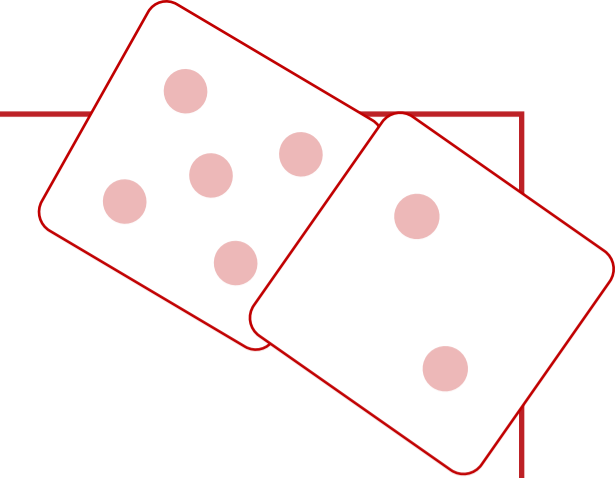
5.2.
Project Management

In project management, you might need to answer the following questions:

Accommodation

- Where is the group going to sleep? Will they have appropriate comfort?
- Does the group need to bring something? (towel, slippers, sleeping bag, etc.)
- What working spaces does the venue offer? Does it fit my needs?
- For outdoor projects: if the weather is bad, do I have a covered space where we can continue working?

Travel

- How to get the whole group on the spot in time, according to the plan?

Food

- What food service is provided?
- What are participants' diets, and how can I answer them?

Safety

- Do participants have insurance?
- In case of an accident, where is the nearest doctor/hospital? How will the participants get there?
- What are participants' individual needs (including mental and physical health) and how will we answer them?

Money

- Does this all fit the budget?

Equipment

- Do we have all the materials we need? How will we get them to the venue?

Administration

- What administrative requirement do I have to fulfil? When and how? Do I have a plan on how to do it?

6.
Implementation

In this chapter, you can take a look at what our training course in Italy, Orvieto, 5-11 September 2022, looked like, and what the participants and trainers thought about it.

Luigi Infantino
project coordinator

The training experience was very important: above all, it gave an opportunity to reflect on what is important to take into consideration when creating a format, in this case, of a training on RPG and LARP in non-formal education.

Our **multidisciplinary team** had great richness and potential, but also some aspects to take into account. If you are going to have an international team, you must be able to communicate easily. You must be sharing skills, knowledge and languages.

You can work remotely, but there must be (at least one month before the training) a meeting of at least 3 to 5 days in person, during which you will work out the program.

The skills each team member must possess include:

- **problem-solving**: dealing with and constructively solving everyday problems;
- **critical and creative thinking**: approaching the situation analytically, exploring possible alternatives and finding original solutions;
- **effective communication and teamwork skills**: expressing oneself in a manner appropriate to the situation and the interlocutor, both verbally and non-verbally (active listening, communication/relational skills);

- **intercultural and empathic approach**: recognizing, discriminating and sharing the emotions of others, challenging stereotypes and prejudices; emotion and stress management: recognizing and regulating one's own emotions and states of tension;
- **personal effectiveness**: belief that one can effectively organize a series of actions necessary to deal with new situations, trials and challenges;
- **organizational/management skills** (of the group, context, time, etc.);
- **management of unforeseen events**
- **theoretical and/or practical knowledge and competence** of the training topics;
- at least 2 people on the team must be **native speakers** of the place where the training takes place.

You should **divide roles clearly**: who does what, by when, who is in charge of materials (preparation, recovery and care), set up, logistics, etc. All team members must know what other colleagues are doing.

The **objectives** of the training must be well understood by team members so they clearly explain them to the participants.

The **program** must be clearly established (either you take our propositions, or replace it partly or fully with your activities). Nothing must be left to chance. At the same time, the program must be flexible, modifiable, adaptable. Several aspects must be taken into account during a training, particularly both the needs and/or requirements of the participants and the stimuli and suggestions that the individual or group may express or bring forth. Team members must be able to enhance such inputs or suggestions.

The construction of the program involves **time management**: it is advisable to prepare a data sheet for each session that includes an indicative calculation of time from explanation, to unfolding, etc.).

The **de-briefing** (reflection) should be meticulously prepared with prompting questions, and it should be clear what should be avoided (e.g., judgment or wanting to bring the answer toward one's own idea at all costs).
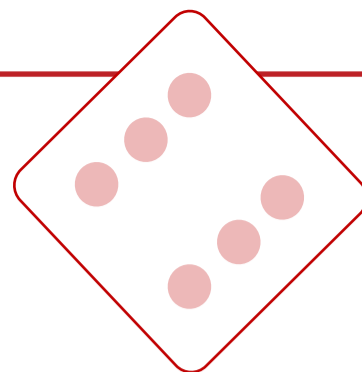
Andréa Fernandes
trainer

For me, the Training Course in Orvieto was a success. As a first-time trainer, I finally had the opportunity to see things from the outside and I found it very stimulating to be there for the participants, facilitating their learning experience and observing the emotional impact created by the activities. The the activities were usually followed by discussions of the people's feelings and learnings, which provided a great deal of inspiration for me. People were able to find the activities relatable for their real lives and they found lessons about themselves, other people and their feelings in them.

The place where we stayed was amazing. But what I was amazed by the most was how quickly an atmosphere of trust and genuine interpersonal relations was created. In 1 week in Orvieto, the participants created meaningful bonds among themselves and the activities helped provide that. The need for collaboration brought people together to make sure they would be able to work in teams. In one activity, they had to allow the others to carry their bodies - this obviously deepened trust and created a bond. Moreover, the process of LARP creation challenged them to show respect for everyone's ideas. It was great to see how they tackled the challenges and cooperated to make something that would make every team member pleased with the result.
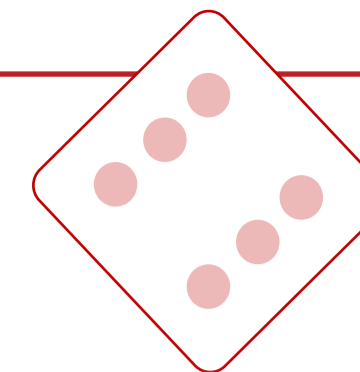

Barbora Urbancová
participant

I enjoyed the training a lot. From the organizational perspective, everything was allright. The facilitators were great, when something wasn't working, they listened to our feedback and have been there for us.

I was a little bit disappointed that the program was focused on the first contact with RPG - how to build a character, how to approach TTRPG and LARP for the first time.

What I enjoyed a lot was creating our own activities, using RPG with educational context. I stepped out a lot from my personal comfort zone during that, which helped me immensely.

The group process of making activities gave me more than the rest of the project, and I truly enjoyed participating in the activities created by others. Some of them were awesome.
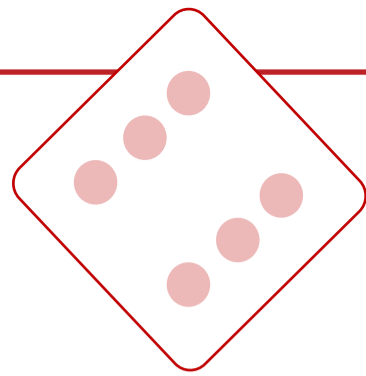
Dylan Barsi
participant

My experience in Orvieto was great. The place was great, the participants and the facilitators were great. The icebreakers were really funny but sometimes I found the activities not entertaining enough, and I felt like the moments of reflection between people from different countries didn't work that much at first, but still people really bonded with each other during meals and moments of breaks, that in my opinion are the best moments to make friends and fully know other people.

I could see from my privileged perspective that the facilitators didn't plan the activities thoroughly, but often at the last moment or the evening before, but I noticed that the effort was great and the interest too. I saw the passion of the junior trainers to fully understand the processes and the work and also to add their ideas and points of view.

About the LARP, I didn't enjoy it very much. Yes, I think people had fun, but it wasn't really clear or entertaining. Most of the fun came from participants themselves or from particular moments of the story, not from the activities. For example, the division in groups was not ideal, because they felt like they didn't have much choice from the beginning, and I think that's the point of LARP, to make the participants feel like their choices matter. Instead the story was linear and it could have ended only one way. At the end, we had to let them win, because they would have been too frustrated if they had lost, and we noticed that. Too much of the fun came

from the facilitators' acting and ideas of the moment. There was too much improvisation. The objects weren't really helpful and often the rules of the games changed because they weren't really defined from the start.

I really liked the activities we did the day after when we asked the participants to make their own games. Almost everyone put really a lot of effort into it, expecially in the RPG games, some of them worked more and some less, but that's part of the process.

I think the passion and effort they put into creating their own games was really impressive. Also, creating groups to take care of the chores was really helpful for bonding. Tensions between some of the participants were solved with not too much problem and there was great communication between the participants but also between the participants and the faciliatators. I felt there wasn't too much of a distance between the facilitators and the participants, just the right amount of distance, but the participants felt really comfortable talking with the facilitators.

In the end, I was left with a really really great memory and I made so many friends and I will hold this experience in my heart forever, because I felt like it changed my life a bit.
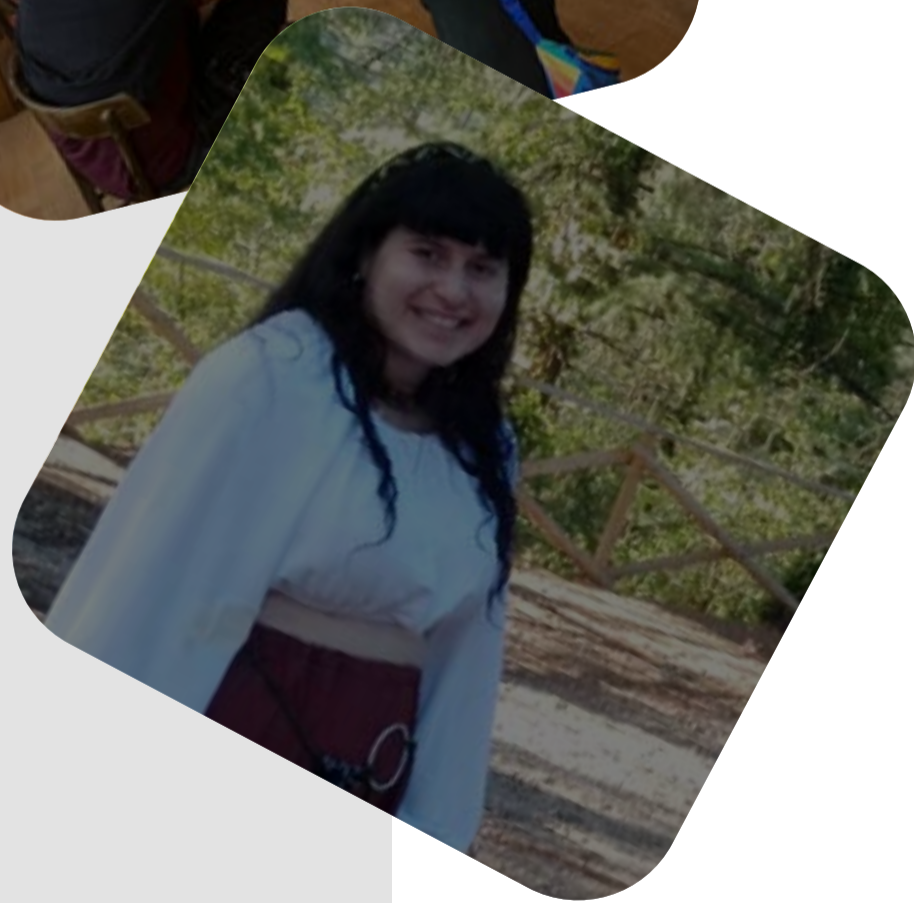
7.
Evaluation

In this chapter, you can take a look at how our training course in Italy, Orvieto, 5-11 September 2022, looked like, and what participants and trainers thought about it.

Evaluation wheel

We asked the participants to indicate their satisfaction with areas you can see in the picture.

The center is absolute satisfaction, the edge is complete dissatisfaction.

We also sent an anonymous evaluation form to the people where they could express their opinions and comments on all these areas.
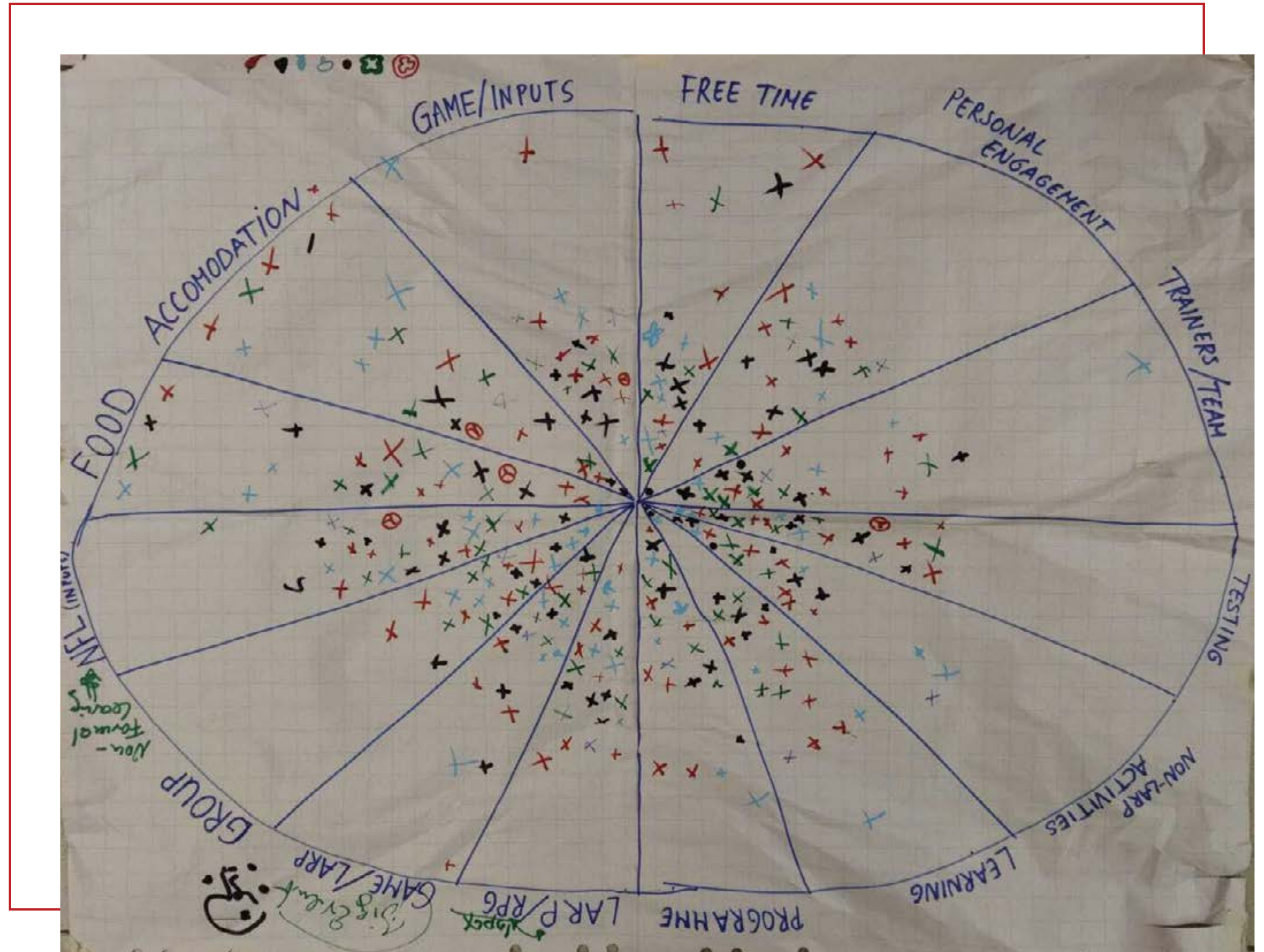
Manual

What is the power and the advantage of edu-RPGs?
What is game, role-playing, LARP?

How to create a RPG, how to facilitate it, what competences are you going to need for it?

What specific activities can you use?

And much more....

Webinars

Interactive education including assignments that helps you to grasp the nature of edu-RPG on the following topics:

What is role-playing/LARP and how to use it?
Non-formal education in role-playing/LARP
How to facilitate edu-RPG/LARP
How to use RPG/LARP online
Typing up loose ends - discussion with involved professionals

Portal

www.role4change.eu

Collected materials
from the project Role for a Change
and all important links from this manual.

Create an online profile for free to get access to all our materials, activities, educational resources, and others, and arrange it all to your liking.
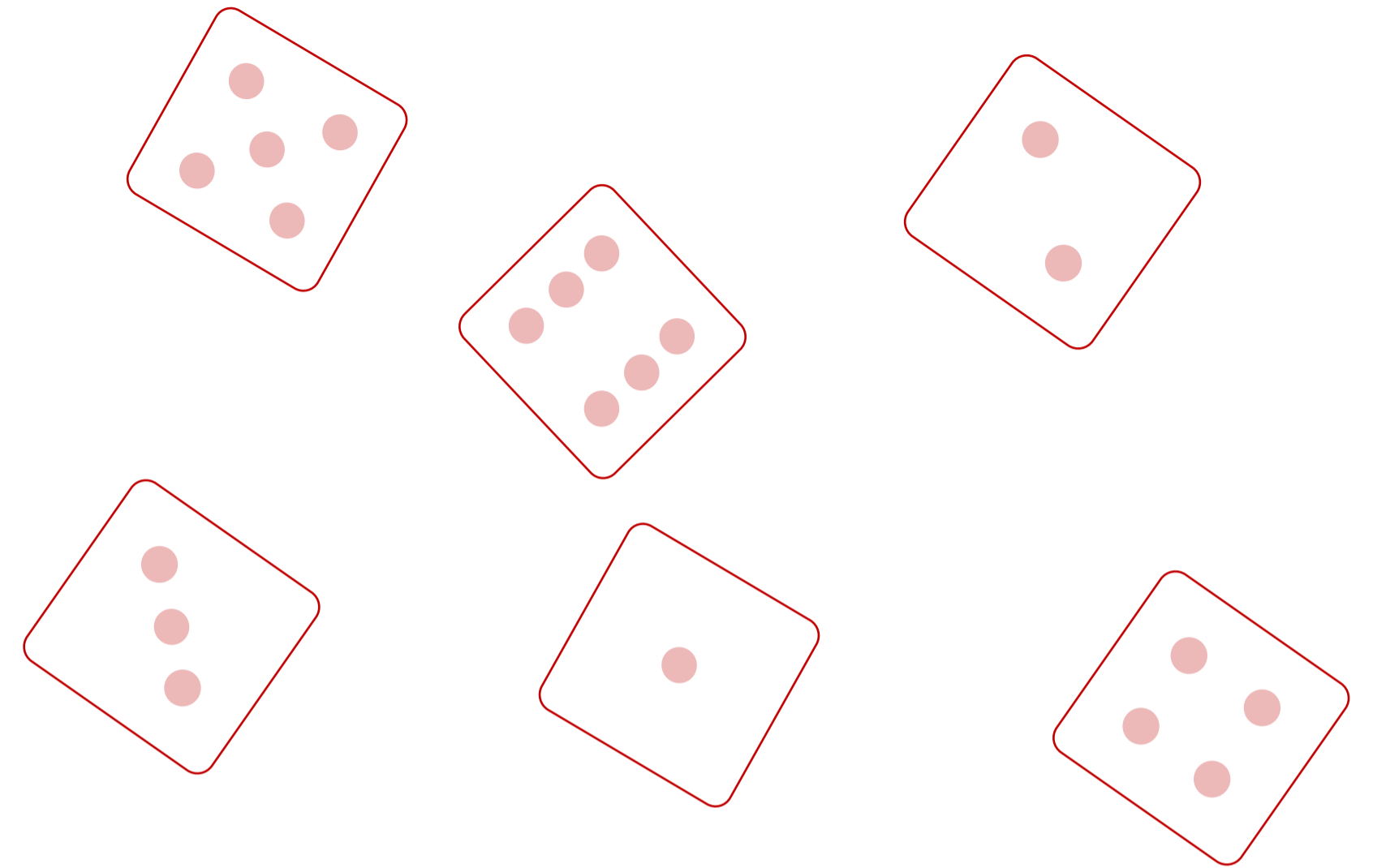
Thank you for reading our training concept on usage of edu-RPGs.

If you are missing anything in the book, please, fill our feedback form.

Based on it, we will be providing updated versions of the Role for a Change training concept.

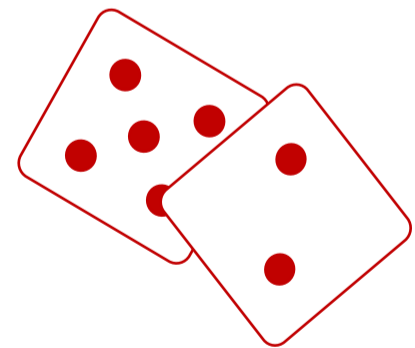**Also, if you have any questions, or simply want to get in touch, don't hesitate to contact us on czechinspire@gmail.com.**

Role for a Change: Training Concept
is a ready-made training
on usage of RPGs in education
that you can take and implement.

It was created
as a part of a KA2 project
"Role for a Change",
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in cooperation of Meta società
cooperativa sociale onlus, INspire,
Stadt Bochum, Roes Cooperativa,
100% ADN, and Eunoia Skopje.

Let's play!