

ECPA/BPC 2009

1. Is this your country's ECPA entry or is it an additional project? (Only one ECPA entry per country plus up to two other projects.)

An ECPA entry – national winner

2. What is the title of the project?

PC Game GhettOut - Simulator of Living Strategies



3. Please give a short general description of the project.

The main pillar of the project Simulator of Living Strategies is the PC game GhettOut, which was developed by the proposing organization in 2008. The game was first meant for the majority population as the simulation of social reality – in our case as the simulation of life in social exclusion at the edge of society. Since 2008 we have started to use the game as the simulator of living strategies for the risk youth. The PC game GhettOut simulates social reality of life on the margins of society. The game contains elements from the area of using addictive drugs, gambling, indebtedness, housing, etc. The pivotal moment is deciding between legal or illegal activities, which are though convenient on a short-term basis. Players have to choose a living strategy that would lead them to a successful goal – obtaining new accommodation within the, by the game, determined time of one year.

The players can try out various living strategies, which they can choose in the real life. An important aspect of the simulator is that the players can immediately feel the consequences of their own decisions - e.g. after not paying the rent, the execution follows. If not regularly going to work, they get fired or in case of depending on addictive drugs it might be hard to find a new job. Another important constituent is the prevention against indebtedness. People living in social exclusion often live from debts, which they gain from non banking institutions, eventhough these people are not solvent, which gets them into debt trap. They are often not aware of the disadvantages of such loans, and they do not know there are differences among the credit grantors.

4. Please describe the objective(s) of the project.

The aim of the project GhettOut – Simulator of Living Strategies is to influence older school children in that way that they would be able to, on the basis of experience and information gained from the game, avoid situations that might cause or enhance their social failure in the future. We are starting from the conviction that the effective way how to increase awareness of the risks of criminal behaviour, and of the disadvantages of satisfying short-term needs based on the financial sources is the direct training enabled by the PC game GhettOut.

Another aim of the project was to create an easily accessible and redistributable educational tool, which is easy to use in schools or other educational institutions working with risk youth.

5. How was the project implemented?

The project has been realized in the form of interactive workshops in schools, special schools, children's homes and low-threshold centers for children. The target groups are children and youth who grow up in a risky environment (e.g. socially excluded localities), and which could tend to criminal behaviour in the future. Workshops are absolutely free of charge.

The game GhettOut is played on notebooks which the organization SPOLEČNOST TADY A TEĎ has at disposal. The workshop is carried out by two lectors at least.

The workshop itself consists of three parts:

1. Introduction – evocation

This phase is evocative – participants of the workshops are encouraged to present their ideas about illegal jobs, legal work, criminal behaviour, using addictive drugs, etc. The evocation serves to directing the imagination of participants about through which ways one can achieve his/her goals, or which means one can choose, or what possibilities one has.

2. Game part - awareness



In this phase, participants of the workshops led by lecturers play the PC game GhettoOut. Participants select a living strategy by their own, which should lead them to the goal of the game – acquisition of new accommodation. During the game, they can raise funds by legal and illegal strategies, whereas the illegal ones may seem more convenient. However, in order to reach the goal of the game, player must put short-term pleasure off, and rather make longer future plans.

3. Final part – reflection

After the practical part, there is an opportunity for reflection of the game behavior of participants. Topics most reflected are as follows: the kind of living strategies participants have chosen, the effect of such strategies, and what are the advantages and disadvantages of illegal activities. Players should get aware of what possibilities they can use while gaining independence from their families in order not to get into difficult life situations that could bring them down on the very social ground.

In the end of the workshops, participants fill in a questionnaire about what possibilities they applied during the game, and what possibilities they would have used if they had got in the same situation in their real life.

6. Were partners involved in planning and/or development and/or implementation of the project? If so, who were they, and what were their roles?

The PC Game GhettoOut was developed by the organization SPOLEČNOST TADY A TEĎ in the years 2007 – 2008 (in April 2008, it was first presented for public). Since September 2008 the game has served as a simulator of living strategies for children and youth endangered by social exclusion, among others by criminal behaviour.

The development of the PC game and implementation of the workshops in educational institutions has been arranged by SPOLEČNOST TADY A TEĎ. Many experts participated on the development of the game. Those mainly were experts whose professional specialization is the area of social exclusion (e.g. an anthropologist who has long time focused on the problems of criminality by the socially excluded persons, social workers from NGOs, etc.).

Vodafone Foundation cooperates on developing the game as financial support and they fund all workshops. For GhettoOut the Vodafone Foundation won a special award for creative use of technology for the benefit of society in the TOP Corporate Philanthropists 2008 survey, presented by the Donors' Forum.

And renowned Czech rapper Bow Wave performs the music for the game.



7. How did you build in plans to measure the performance of the project? Has the project been evaluated? How, and by whom?

In the end of every workshop, participants fill in a form which reflects the aims of the project – the awareness of successful living strategies, and risks of indebtedness and of criminal behaviour etc. Due to the fact the period of duration of the project determines in December 2009 the answers of the participants of the workshops could not be statistically operated yet. The preliminary results from the filled out forms suggest that, in the real life, about 70 % of the players would prefer legal strategies to the illegal ones. Another indicator of the successfulness is the increasing number of visitors of the web page www.ghettout.cz.

It indicates the players tend to replay the game, and try out various living strategies, which should make them to reach the goal of the game.

8. What were the results? How far were the objectives of the project achieved?

From the perspective of innovative implementation of the project into schools and other educational institutions, the results are completely fulfilled – the educational institutions are interested in the project. Currently, we visit one institution a week. During the first year of implementation, the game was played by more than 450 students in 30 schools, children's homes, low-threshold centers and cultural happenings for children and youth. From the player's feed-back (the final reflection and questionnaires) it results that they, through playing the game, realize the consequences and risks of criminal behaviour, pathological phenomena, and loaning from non banking organizations. After playing the game, the players are able to reflect such risks, and identify those living strategies that minimalize them.

9. Are there reports or documents available on the project? In print or on the Web? Please, give references to the most relevant ones.

The PC game web page: <http://www.ghettout.cz>

Schools:

<http://www.zsstraz.cz/index.php?p=148>

<http://www.stibro.cz/bread.php?id=2433>

Press:

http://www.lidovky.cz/online-hra-simuluje-zivot-v-ghettu-dt9-/ln_noviny.asp?c=A080430_000087_ln_noviny_sko&klic=225212&mes=080430_0

<http://www.blesk.cz/clanek/zpravy-zajimavosti/111565/hra-pro-deti-z-detskych-domovu-jak-ven-z-ghetta.html>

Web sites:

http://www.vodafone.cz/about_en/press/news.htm?id=563&year=2009

http://www.csreurope.org/news.php?type=&action=show_news&news_id=2053

http://www.donorsforum.cz/vysledky_topff08

http://www.integracniprogramy.cz/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=853:poitaova-hra-ghettout&catid=548:f4-zaitkova-pedagogika&Itemid=336

http://bonusweb.idnes.cz/magazin/deset-nejvice-romskych-her-d0u-/clanek.A090407_151437_bw-clanek_vdp.idn

http://bonusweb.idnes.cz/magazin/deset-nejvice-romskych-her-d0u-/clanek.A090407_151437_bw-clanek_vdp.idn

State institutions:

<http://www.mpsv.cz/cs/5470> (The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs)



10. Please, write a *one page* description of the project:

Organization SPOLEČNOST TADY a TEĎ developed a PC Game GhettoOut - Simulator of Living Strategies within the years 2007-2008. The aim of this project was to create an easily expandable and attractive educational tool which would simulate reality in socially excluded localities where specific rules for living are applied.

At the beginning of the game, player is in a threat of expulsion and must obtain money to get some other accommodation. The world of the game offers him/her both legal (permanent jobs, temporary jobs) and less legal possibilities (gambling, non banking loans, doing business with gangsters and petty thefts) to get money. Further, there are allurements like alcohol, drugs, that when being used, have a direct influence on the development of the game, and the final success in the game. The same rules are valid in the game as those applied in the common life. The player decides whether he/she will pay the rent and bills, how much will spend on food, if he/she is going to keep good relationships with the family and keep good mood.

Part of the project was also to get the game into the awareness of children and young people. This part has so far been realized in a way that trained lecturers offer workshops where the game is being played to different institutions (schools, children's homes, educational institutions, low-threshold centers) where the children from socially excluded localities are often found as well as children under threat of getting to the social bottom line. The workshop is provided for free and to be available for everybody, the organization has its own notebooks.

The development of the game was realized by an expert group which consists of an anthropologist and social workers from NGOs. There were no other partners involved in the project. At the workshops the game was played by almost 500 children in 30 different institutions between April 2008 and June 2009, and the attendance of the web sites of the game has an increasing trend. This game with its theme is unique in the Czech Republic, and among children there is still a big interest in the workshops. The workshop lasts three hours, and is composed of the beginning discussion and explanation of the game. After that the players play the game, and in the end, there is a final reflection about new experiences and a discussion.

In the end, the players fill in a form. Both from these forms and discussions it is obvious that most players can reflect that the long-term and more demanding strategies (going to work and temporary jobs) are more convenient in terms of the objective than short-term strategies (non banking loans, thefts or gambling).

The aims of the project are thus being met.



