

THE RIGHTS HERO IMPACT REPORT



Co-funded by
the European Union

Executive Summary

Rights Hero (*Rights Hero- Promotion of the Awareness of the Convention of the Rights of the Child through an Online Game*, Erasmus+ KA220-SCH - Cooperation partnerships in school education) is a project which aims to raise awareness on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child through the use of an electronic game. The electronic game is addressed mainly to elementary and lower secondary school children. It is a game that is intended to be played at school or to be discussed at school. It was developed in order to become an attractive way to introduce to the children the content of the Convention and is available in English, Greek, Italian, Danish and Romanian. The project has been implemented by a transnational consortium comprising 7 organisations from 4 countries (Denmark, Greece, Italy, Romania).

This impact report highlights the transformative effects of the "Rights Hero" game and educational scenarios on students, teachers, and communities. Through engaging activities, discussions, and interactive learning experiences, this initiative has empowered students to become informed and active participants in society, fostering a deeper understanding of democratic principles and promoting civic engagement.

This research was conducted on a sample comprising 3506 students and 177 teachers from Italy, Denmark, Greece, Germany and Romania, offering a first perspective on attitudes towards children's rights and the impact of the rights hero game.

Key Findings:

- *Enhanced awareness and understanding*: this initiative has led to increased awareness and understanding of children's rights principles among students. Through interactive activities and discussions, students have gained insight into their rights and responsibilities as citizens, empowering them to advocate for change and address social issues.
- *Teacher capacity building*: Teachers have played a crucial role in facilitating children's rights education activities, demonstrating creativity and adaptability in implementing the "Rights Hero" game and related activities. Despite challenges such as time constraints and curriculum alignment, teachers have shown a commitment to promoting civic engagement and democratic participation among their students.

- *Impact on civic engagement:* The Rights Hero game and educational scenarios have had a positive impact on civic engagement and democratic participation, providing students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to participate meaningfully in decision-making processes. By fostering critical thinking, debate, and advocacy skills, this initiative contributes to the development of a more engaged and participatory citizenry.
- *Challenges and opportunities:* While children's rights education initiatives have demonstrated significant benefits, challenges remain in ensuring equitable access and sustained engagement over time. Efforts to address barriers to participation, promote inclusive decision-making, and sustain engagement are essential for maximizing the impact of these initiatives and advancing children's rights education globally.

Ensuring the long-term sustainability of the project is essential for maximizing its impact. While the initial implementation has been successful in stimulating student interest and engagement, ongoing support and resources are needed to maintain momentum and facilitate continued learning. Collaborative efforts between educators, policymakers, and developers are necessary to address technical challenges, update content, and promote widespread adoption of the game in educational settings.

As we look to the future, it is imperative that we continue to prioritize children's rights education and invest in initiatives that empower young people to become active and informed citizens. By integrating children's rights principles into school curricula, promoting teacher capacity building, and fostering partnerships between schools, governments, and civil society organizations, we can create a more inclusive and equitable society where the rights of all children are respected and upheld. Together, we can build a brighter future for generations to come, grounded in the principles of justice, equality, and respect for human rights.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Executive Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Methodology](#)

[National perspectives](#)

- [Denmark](#)
- [Greece](#)
- [Italy](#)
- [Romania](#)

[Impact](#)

- [Impact on civic engagement and democratic participation](#)
- [Impact on children's awareness of their rights](#)
- [Impact on teacher capacity](#)

[Challenges & Opportunities in children's rights education](#)

[Recommendations for stakeholders for enhancing project impact and sustainability](#)

[Conclusions](#)

Introduction

The rights of children are integral to a just and equitable world. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), a milestone document ratified by nations worldwide, underscores the significance of safeguarding children's rights, ensuring their well-being, and fostering an environment where their voices are not only heard but respected. The European Union, with its commitment to upholding these principles, has played a pivotal role in shaping legislation that aligns with the UNCRC, striving to create an environment where every child can thrive.

Within this broader commitment to children's rights lies the "Rights Hero" project—a collaborative endeavor undertaken by a consortium of seven organizations spanning Greece, Denmark, Italy, and Romania. This project has been meticulously designed to target a crucial age group, children aged 9-14, with the aim of not only enhancing their awareness of their rights but also fostering civic engagement and democratic participation.

Recognizing the influential role educators play in shaping young minds, the project strategically focused on enhancing the capacity of teachers to organize workshops and discussions in schools. Central to the project's strategy is the "Rights Hero" educational game, an innovative tool that captivates the interest of children while imparting crucial knowledge about their rights.

As teachers implemented the educational game and scenarios in classrooms, their feedback became the foundation for this comprehensive impact assessment report. This report, a collaborative effort by the project consortium, is a key deliverable aimed at policymakers, education stakeholders, headteachers, and professionals within the educational sphere. It is created to serve as a testament to the tangible impact of "The Rights Hero" project, providing evidence that not only validates its efficacy but also lays the groundwork for future scalability and sustainability.

In the pages that follow, we delve into the nuanced impact of "The Rights Hero" project, exploring the transformative journey from heightened awareness to empowered action, as witnessed in the lives of the children and educators it touched.

Methodology

The research design employed in this impact report is a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the "Rights Hero" project.

Mixed methods research is an approach to inquiry that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms. It involves philosophical assumptions, the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and the mixing of both approaches in a study. Thus, it is more than simply collecting and analyzing both kinds of data; it also involves the use of both approaches in tandem so that the overall strength of a study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research.¹

Data collection instruments:

The instruments employed for data collection were carefully designed to align with the research goals.

- INITIAL QUESTIONNAIRES for students completed before the workshop, designed to evaluate the knowledge of the students on the topics.
- FINAL QUESTIONNAIRES for students completed maximum 1 day after the workshop, similar to the initial questionnaire.
- TEACHER REPORTING to monitor the implementation of the workshops and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed materials for future improvements. Qualitative insights from teacher reports provide context to quantitative results, offering a richer understanding of the project's impact. The teacher reporting form serves as a feedback loop for ongoing improvement, allowing the project team to identify areas of success and areas that may require adjustments for future implementations.

Research questions:

- How does participation in the "Rights Hero" project impact children aged 9-14 in terms of their awareness and understanding of their rights as outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)?

¹ Creswell, John W., and J. David Creswell. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications, 2017.

- In what ways does the project contribute to the promotion of civic engagement and democratic participation among children aged 9-14?
- What is the effectiveness of the "Rights Hero" educational game and associated scenarios in enhancing children's comprehension and retention of their rights?
- What are the key insights and feedback from teachers regarding the usability, engagement, and overall impact of the "Rights Hero" educational game and scenarios in the classroom setting?

The entire data collection process unfolded within a predefined timeline, synchronized with the project's milestones. This deliberate approach ensured that both quantitative and qualitative data were collected at key points in the implementation journey, offering a comprehensive and timely assessment of the "Rights Hero" project's impact.

Participants in this study include teachers who attended the webinars organized by the project consortium, implementing the "Rights Hero" educational game and associated scenarios in classrooms. The focus is on teachers working with students aged 9-14 in schools across Greece, Denmark, Italy, and Romania.

National perspectives

In this chapter, we delve into the national perspectives surrounding the impact of children's rights, centering our exploration on crucial dimensions such as participation in activities related to these rights. Through nuanced interpretation, we examine children's knowledge of their rights, the attitudes they hold towards various statements related to their rights, and the efficacy of the educational scenarios and educational game in shaping children's perceptions and beliefs.

We closely assess the various educational scenarios in which children are introduced to their rights, identifying potential areas of improvement and gaps in the transmission of essential information. This examination provides a roadmap for refining the educational scenarios to foster a more profound understanding of children's rights.

As we progress, we capture the changing attitudes of students in relation to their rights. We explore instances where participants felt less engaged, aiming to identify the factors contributing to disconnection, and conversely, parts of the educational journey where they found heightened engagement.

In essence, this chapter explores the diverse landscape of Danish, Greek, Italian and Romanian perspectives on children's rights, exploring the intricacies of participation, knowledge, attitudes, educational scenarios, areas of improvement, and the dynamic shifts in students' attitudes.

- **Denmark**

Data collection

This research was conducted on a sample comprising 57 students and 2 teachers from two schools, one in Germany one in Denmark, offering a first perspective on attitudes towards children's rights and the impact of the rights hero game.

The Danish partner reported difficulties finding and convincing teachers to play the game in their classes. Through the webinars and alternative outreach methods, only two teachers could be convinced to implement the game in their class during the running period of the project. Even though other teachers stated their interest in the game and the related activities, multiple factors kept most of the teachers from participating in the project.

- Firstly, the project timing with the implementation of the workshops at the end of 2023 collided with many of the teachers' plans and Christmas-focused activities, furthermore, teachers stated that the preparation of a class around the game would be too much work and that the topic is not as relevant for the curriculum that they need to stick to in their class planning.
- Other teachers mentioned upcoming exam phases in the beginning of the year which meant that they had to prepare the students for exams and had no time to play the game in class.
- Teachers of 12 to 14 year old children found the game too easy and not educational enough for children of that age.

The responsible organisation, Crossing Borders, has multiple theories as to why the project and its outcomes did not reach the target audience as initially anticipated.

- In Denmark, a highly digitalized country, a big part of the school classes incorporates digital teaching methods and the use of computers and iPads. Therefore, the approach is not as new as in other countries and does not spark the same interest in teachers as elsewhere.
- This also means that the market for free teaching materials is quite saturated and more curriculum-relevant content or materials with higher graphic quality are easily available for teachers. The Danish government openly provides teachers with an abundance of teaching materials on their governmental platform emu.dk.
- Another theory is that in a privileged country like Denmark with the third lowest percentage of children at risk of Poverty or social exclusion in European studies² children's rights might not seem as relevant to organisations, teachers and parents in Denmark as in other countries.

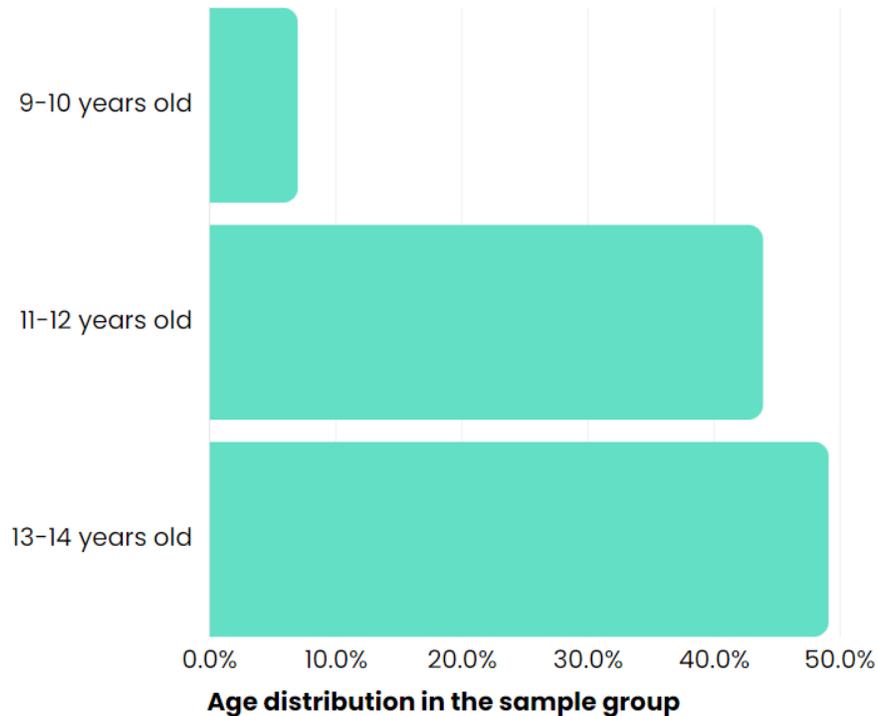
Because of the lack of engagement from schools, teachers and non-formal educators, despite continuous efforts from Crossing Borders, the Danish coordinator resorted to reaching out to international teachers. A teacher from the north of Germany who works for a private school, reacted positively to the invitation to play the game in class, making a big effort planning a workshop and playing the game with his students. A teacher from Denmark who participated in other Projects coordinated by Crossing Borders before also showed interest and implemented the game with Danish students.

² Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Children_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion

The lack of enthusiasm that the project faced in Denmark is building a strong case for further research and self-reflection on the impact of the game and cultural/national differences in the attitudes towards digital teaching methods in teachers and educators and the market for such materials.

Initial knowledge of childrens' rights

In the collected data related to children's rights awareness among different age groups in Denmark and Germany, only 6% of the participating children were between 9 and 10 years old, the group of 11-12-year-olds marked 43,9% and 13-14 year-olds 49,1%. Previous participation in activities associated with children's rights was reported by 43,9 % of the students, the majority of children either never participated in such activities or could not remember. Children who had participated in previous activities were present in all age groups. That the majority of children had no prior experience with children's rights was also reflected in the answers to the question if they could name any children's rights. The majority of the students answered with "I don't know". Only 17 students gave examples or suggestions for children's rights.



The five most frequently mentioned rights by the participants include:

- The right to go to school/education
- The right to a safe home
- The right of food & water

The answers of the participants mostly reflected fundamental children's rights. Additionally, one child stated that everyone should be respected, which suggests a moral perspective on the rights of children. That is complemented by the statement of another participant who said that it is their right to be "protected by their family" which implies underlying knowledge about the duty and responsibility of guardians and family members to ensure the well-being of the children.

Regarding self-advocacy, 64.9 % of participants expressed agreement or complete agreement with the statement, **"I feel brave enough to protect my own rights and the rights of other kids."**



"I feel brave enough to protect my own rights and the rights of other kids."

When assessing their awareness of seeking help and reporting concerns, 66.7% affirmed that they know how to do so appropriately. The positive disposition towards self-advocacy is a promising finding, as this self-assurance aligns with the goals of empowering children to assert themselves and contribute to a supportive community. However, further investigation could explore the factors contributing to the low feeling of self-advocacy in the other 33.3% that either did not agree with the statement or did not know.

Attitudes towards respecting other children's rights are notably positive, with 77.3% of respondents agreeing or completely agreeing with the statement, "It's a good idea to

respect other children's rights." This shared perspective could serve as a foundation for initiatives promoting a culture of inclusivity and empathy among children.

In terms of self-assurance in expressing thoughts and ideas, 56.1% agree or completely agree with the statement, "I feel sure of myself when I share my thoughts and ideas because I know that my voice is important." A special focus here should be barriers that need to be overcome, so that the 43.9 % that selected "I don't know" or showed disagreement with the statement, feel more empowered to speak and are more likely to be heard.

Lastly, the majority of students (78.8%) express agreement or complete agreement with the proposition that **"Every kid should have the chance to go to school, no matter if they're a boy or girl, where they come from, or what they look like."** 73.5% agree or completely agree with the statement that **"it is really important to help and include kids with disabilities so they can be a part of everything in our community."** Still, several children disagreed with the last two statements of the preliminary survey or said "I don't know". This suggests that the reason for their disagreement needs to be inquired and possible stereotypes need to be analysed, discussed and deconstructed in class and in connection with the game's activities.

"I was happy to see that they were interested in the topic as a whole, when I started the lesson with a warm-up thought experiment, in which the students had to imagine being stranded on a deserted island and having to establish rules, how children that will live on the island are going to have fulfilled lives." (German teacher)

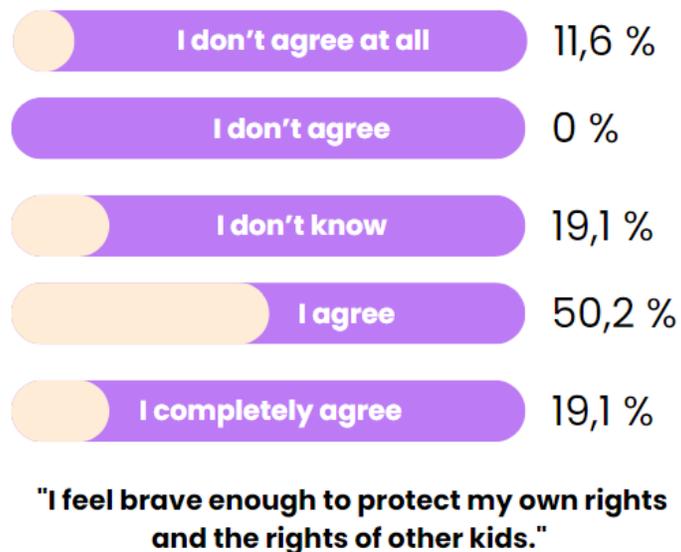


"it is really important to help and include kids with disabilities so they can be a part of everything in our community."

Childrens' knowledge and attitudes after the activities

The game had a generally positive impact on children's attitudes, particularly in self-advocacy, respecting others' rights, and understanding inclusive education. Confidence in self-advocacy increased, although some students disagreed, indicating a need for further exploration. There was a slight decrease in self-assurance in expression, suggesting an area for investigation. The game effectively promoted understanding and empathy towards marginalized groups, particularly children with disabilities. However, providing more practical guidance on seeking help and reporting concerns and showcasing ways for empowerment could enhance the game's effectiveness. Overall, while the game showed promise in promoting positive attitudes towards children's rights, there is room for improvement to maximize its impact.

After the activity, 69.3% completely agreed or agreed that they feel brave enough to protect their own rights and the rights of other kids, in comparison to the 64.9% students before playing the game. This shows that this positive disposition remained high after the activity, and even increased slightly reflecting an improved confidence in self-advocacy. However, it is also important to mention that 11,6 % of children stated that they do not agree at all with the statement after playing the game, which is an increased number than before.



The activity contributed to an interesting shift in attitudes, with a higher percentage (11.5%) completely disagreeing that they know how to ask for help and report concerns. The overall number of students agreeing or completely agreeing with the statement stayed about the same. The difference becomes noticeable looking at the shift in students reporting "I don't know" in the initial study which was 21%, after playing the game this number lays at 15.4 % but the number of students concretely saying they don't know how

to ask for help increased. This could be an indicator that the game possibly does not offer enough practical guidance on how to ask for help for students who were unsure and did not already feel empowered before playing the game.

With 80.9 % a positive shift was observed in comparison to 77.3% before completely agreeing that it's a good idea to respect other children's rights. Also to notice is, that after playing the game no child reported to disagree completely with the statement where as before the percentage for this answer was 5,2 %. This shows that the rights Hero Game and the related activities highlight the moral importance of respecting other children's rights.

Interestingly, the activities implemented in the workshops contributed to a slight shift towards more ambivalent and negative attitudes towards expressing thoughts and the importance of the children's voice. The main shift becomes visible when looking at the answer option "I don't know". Before playing the game 28 % of students stated that they did not know if they felt sure to share their thoughts and ideas because their voice matters, after playing the game it was 62 %. This could imply many things. Firstly, it could indicate that the children do not feel like they are being empowered and inspired enough by the game's scenarios, gameplay and answer options. This shift in attitudes could also be more related to the activities conducted around the game or/and the small sample group. Nonetheless, this category is worth exploring further. So far the insights for the reason behind this shift are very limited.



"I feel sure of myself when I share my thoughts and ideas because I know that my voice is important."

The opinions about inclusive education stayed roughly the same while the attitudes towards the inclusion of children with disabilities changed positively post-game and activities. With 80.7% compared to the previous 73.5%, 7.2 % more children agree or completely agree that it is important to help and include kids with disabilities so they can

be a part of everything in our community. This highlights that especially the topic about the inclusion of children with disabilities created a heightened awareness in the children.

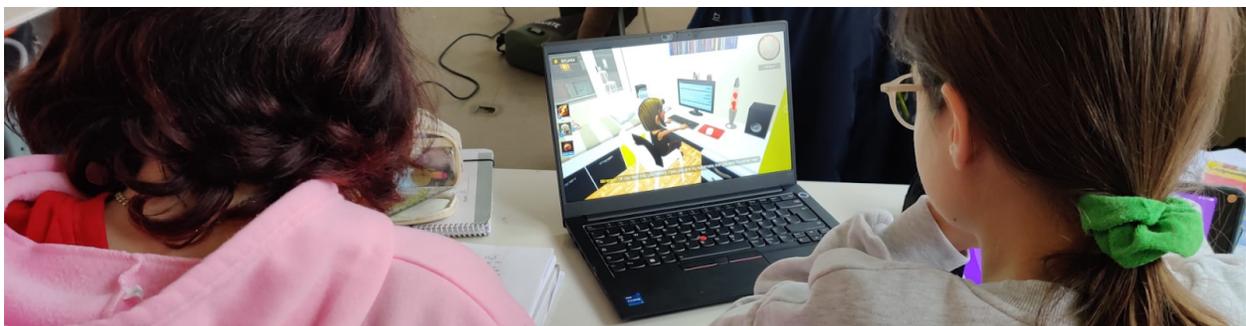
“A male students e.g. noted that he would like to see playgrounds have additional sections for disabled children for them to play next to other children and feel included, also stating that this way they might avoid injuries by not trying to play with the wrong toys/contraptions” (German Teacher)



“it is really important to help and include kids with disabilities so they can be a part of everything in our community.”

Adding on to the quantitative data collection, qualitative observations identified in the teacher reporting forms offer useful insights into the experience of using The Rights Hero Game and Manual in the two classes.

The teacher observed a noticeable shift in the students' attitudes towards children's rights after playing the 3D game. Students demonstrated a heightened awareness of the issues presented in the game and actively considered potential solutions. For instance, one male student suggested incorporating additional sections in playgrounds for disabled children to promote inclusivity and prevent injuries, indicating a deeper understanding and empathy towards the rights of all children.



Through engaging with the game, students gained insights into various aspects of children's rights. Particularly impactful were scenarios within the game, such as children striving to improve their circumstances and instances of educational deprivation due to cultural practices like early marriage. While it's challenging to quantify the exact impact, these scenarios prompted meaningful reflection and dialogue among the students, enhancing their understanding of the complexities surrounding children's rights.

In summary, the teachers noted positive changes in the students' attitudes towards children's rights following their interaction with the educational game. Students not only enjoyed the activity but also demonstrated a deeper understanding and empathy towards the challenges faced by children worldwide, as depicted in the game's scenarios. This suggests that interactive gaming experiences can be effective tools for fostering awareness and promoting discussions around important social issues such as children's rights.



Educational game & scenarios: most engaging aspects

The incorporation of educational games into the learning environment has proven to be effective for engaging students and fostering a deeper understanding of complex subjects. The teachers implementing the game in Germany and Denmark showed creativity in applying the scenarios from the Teacher's Manual and creating their own activities. One of the teachers chose to implement a debate and a reflective writing activity in the class following the game due to time constraints and a lack of specific lesson materials provided in the guide.



Recognizing the mixed nature of the lesson, blending elements of politics and English, the teacher crafted their own materials to facilitate language acquisition and reflection on the game content. Students engaged in writing reflective essays in English, adopting the perspective of the player character and reporting the situations encountered in the game in a detailed way. This approach aimed to encourage critical thinking, language development, and deeper understanding of the game's themes within the

constraints of the available resources and class context.

Scenario 5: Why is the integration of children with disabilities important? (Discussion)

Scenario 6: Are girls allowed to go to school? (Discussion)

Scenario 10: The return on planet Spork (Creative Writing task)

Scenario 16: Sexual harassment (Discussion)

Overall comments:

Overall, students thoroughly enjoyed the activity, comprising both the educational game and the accompanying scenarios. They quickly grasped the game controls and actively participated in discussions related to the topic after playing the game. Despite some initial criticism regarding graphics, they found various aspects of the game intriguing, particularly the voice acting and special abilities that enabled them to interact with the virtual environment in novel ways.

“They definitely seemed to remember the situations of the game, and interestingly enough they were actually considering the solutions they encountered in the game.” (German teacher)

Based on student reports, two specific cases from the game appeared to have left a significant impression on them. Firstly, the child labour case in the game where children were striving to improve their circumstances resonated deeply with the students. Secondly, the scenario involving a girl being denied education and instructed to remain at home due to an impending marriage also made a strong impact. These instances likely prompted students to reflect on issues such as child labour, gender inequality, and barriers

to education, fostering empathy and awareness of the challenges faced by children in different contexts.

Educational game & scenarios: areas for improvement

The educational game and its scenarios have shown considerable merit in engaging students and fostering awareness of children's rights. However, upon closer inspection, it becomes evident that there are areas that need to be considered in further development of the game and that are ripe for improvement to make the game more impactful.

In considering feedback from both students and educators regarding the educational game focused on children's rights, several key areas for improvement have emerged. Firstly, in terms of gameplay and functionalities, it has been noted that clearer instructions are needed for utilizing special abilities within the game. This would help prevent confusion among students and ensure a smoother gameplay experience. Additionally, adjustments to audio settings, such as lowering ambient and music volume, have been suggested to enhance comprehension of recorded materials and minimize distractions, ultimately improving the overall learning experience.

Secondly, concerning game materials and topics, there are several avenues for enhancement. It has been proposed that the initial context of the game could be enriched by integrating historical or social background information related to children's rights, alongside relevant statistics and facts. This would increase the educational relevance of the game and provide students with a deeper understanding of the issues at hand. Furthermore, incorporating real-world cases and prominent voices within the game has been recommended to foster authenticity and deeper engagement among students. This could be achieved through verbatim theater-style narratives or by highlighting connections to sustainable development goals.

Another suggestion for improvement is the introduction of a "Stats and Decisions" screen at the conclusion of the game. This screen would summarize students' choices and



convictions throughout the game, providing a gratification system for their efforts (e.g an automatically generated certificate) and would have been useful for facilitating later reference and class discussions. It is also a tool the teacher can use to measure the learning effect. Additionally, enriching the game with diverse media formats, such as video clips, narrations, official documents, or interviews, has been proposed to provide multiple avenues for student engagement and enhance the overall learning experience.

Furthermore, it has been noted that the cases presented in the game could be made more concrete by incorporating true stories with specific details. This would help students better understand and relate to the abstract concepts of children's rights. Finally, implementing assessment mechanisms within the game, such as challenging situations or moments of truth, has been suggested to test students' understanding and enhance their learning experiences and motivation.

In summary, by addressing these areas of improvement, the Rights Hero game can become more effective in engaging students, promoting awareness of children's rights, and facilitating meaningful learning experiences within the classroom. Additionally, the incorporation of a better gratification system for student achievements would further enhance the overall impact and effectiveness of the game.

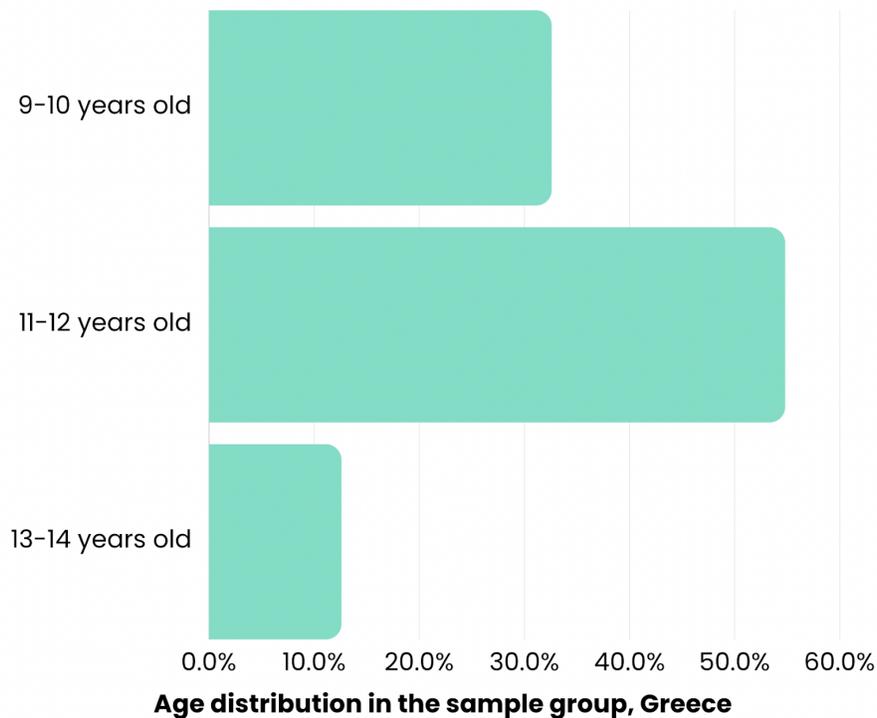
- Greece

Data collection

This research was conducted on a diverse sample comprising 816 students and 43 teachers from various educational institutions, offering a comprehensive and representative perspective on national attitudes towards children's rights.

Initial knowledge of childrens' rights

In examining the data related to children's rights awareness among different age groups in Greece, notable patterns emerged. Participation in activities associated with children's rights is distributed among age groups, with 32,6%, 54,8%, and 12,6% engagement rates for 9-10-year-olds, 11-12-year-olds, and 13-14-year-olds, respectively. This suggests an increased engagement as children progress from 9-10 to 11-12 years, followed by a decline in the 13-14 age group. Further investigation into the reasons behind this fluctuation could unveil factors influencing children's participation at different developmental stages.



The five most frequently mentioned rights by the participants include:

- Food & Water
- Play/Entertainment
- Housing
- Freedom
- School

These rights underscore fundamental concerns articulated by the sampled children and the priorities reflect not only basic necessities but also aspirations for personal expression, recreation, and education. Policymakers and educators can leverage these insights to tailor interventions that align with the voiced needs of the children.

Regarding self-advocacy, 73.6% of participants expressed agreement or complete agreement with the statement, **"I feel brave enough to protect my own rights and the rights of other kids."**



"I feel brave enough to protect my own rights and the rights of other kids."

When assessing their awareness of seeking help and reporting concerns, 78.6% affirmed that they know how to do so appropriately. The positive disposition towards self-advocacy is a promising finding, as this self-assurance aligns with the goals of empowering children to assert themselves and contribute to a supportive community. However, further

investigation could explore the factors contributing to the varying degrees of self-advocacy across age groups.

"A special moment was when we discussed harassment and safety online." (Greek teacher)

Attitudes towards respecting other children's rights are notably positive, with 89.8% of respondents agreeing or completely agreeing with the statement, "It's a good idea to respect other children's rights." This shared perspective could serve as a foundation for initiatives promoting a culture of inclusivity and empathy among children.

In terms of self-assurance in expressing thoughts and ideas, 64.7% agree or completely agree with the statement, "I feel sure of myself when I share my thoughts and ideas because I know that my voice is important."

Lastly, commitment to inclusive education is evident, as 87.5% express agreement or complete agreement with the proposition that **"Every kid should have the chance to go to school, no matter if they're a boy or girl, where they come from, or what they look like."**



"Every kid should have the chance to go to school, no matter if they're a boy or girl, where they come from, or what they look like."

Childrens' knowledge and attitudes after the activities

Analyzing the data on children's knowledge and attitudes post-participation in activities, notable shifts in their awareness and perspectives come to light. The activities seem to have had a notable impact on the children's understanding of their rights, particularly in the context of various scenarios presented during the game.

The comparative analysis before and after the activity reveals a significant increase in awareness regarding certain rights, notably in the domains of housing and school. The scenario addressing no labor witnessed a noteworthy surge, becoming the most recognized right after the activity. The core rights related to basic needs, such as housing and nutrition, alongside the right to leisure time and games, maintained a consistent level of recognition both before and after the activity. Other rights, including health, peace, and family, showed minimal fluctuations, indicating a stable baseline understanding among the participants.

A striking observation is the reduction in the percentage of students claiming "I don't know," especially evident before the activity. This decline post-activity suggests an enhanced comprehension of their rights following the engaging educational experience.

Before the activity, 42.3% completely agreed that they feel brave enough to protect their own rights and the rights of other kids, with an additional 40.4% expressing agreement. This positive disposition remained high after the activity, reflecting a sustained confidence in self-advocacy.



"I feel brave enough to protect my own rights and the rights of other kids."

The activity contributed to a positive shift in attitudes, with a higher percentage (46.7%) completely agreeing that they know how to **ask for help and report concerns**. The overall agreement increased, indicating an improvement in their awareness and confidence in addressing potential issues.

A substantial shift was observed in the positive direction, with 72.1% completely agreeing that it's a **good idea to respect other children's rights**. This emphasizes the influence of the activity in fostering a deeper appreciation for mutual respect and inclusivity.

"They realized that even within the classroom there are differences in behavior. The simplest, others are more shy, others more sociable, more fearless, more scared." (Greek teacher)

The activity contributed to a slight shift towards more positive attitudes in terms of feeling sure of oneself when sharing thoughts and ideas, with 29.8% completely agreeing.

Post-activity, a robust consensus emerged, with 72.8% completely agreeing that **every kid should have the chance to go to school**, demonstrating a heightened commitment to inclusive education.



"Every kid should have the chance to go to school, no matter if they're a boy or girl, where they come from, or what they look like."

Beyond the quantitative shifts, qualitative observations identified in the teacher reporting forms offer valuable insights into the children's evolving perspectives. The activities prompted considerations that had not previously been contemplated, such as the nuances of child labor and the inclusion of children with disabilities in communal activities.

The enhanced sensitivity towards scenarios involving people with mobility disabilities, changing attitudes towards refugees, and a growing awareness of real-world rights infringements showcased a positive evolution in the children's understanding of social issues.

In summary, the post-activity data suggests that the interactive educational experience played a pivotal role in refining children's knowledge of their rights and fostering a more nuanced and empathetic perspective towards various social challenges. The observed changes in attitudes signify a potential long-term impact on the participants' approach to advocating for and respecting children's rights.



Educational game & scenarios: most engaging aspects

The incorporation of educational games into the learning environment has proven to be an effective tool for engaging students and fostering a deeper understanding of complex

subjects. As we analyze the most engaging aspects of the educational game and its scenarios, the feedback from students and educators provides valuable insights.

Scenario 1: Are the children allowed to work?

Scenario 1 emerged as the most captivating for the students, who demonstrated a keen interest by posing numerous questions seeking clarity on the concept of child labor. Students, initially perceiving child labor as an unreal phenomenon, found the scenario eye-opening, acknowledging its existence and relevance in the real world.

Scenario 4: Can everybody play in the playground?

Scenario 4 was chosen by students due to their desire to contribute to helping children with special needs.

The scenario effectively conveyed the message that playing is a universal right for all children, irrespective of their physical condition. In one particular case, the impending creation of a new playground near the school heightened the relevance of the scenario, aligning with the students' immediate surroundings.

Scenarios 5 & 2: Why is integration of children with disability important?/ What should I do?

The selection of Scenarios 5 and 2 coincided with the World Day of Children with Disabilities, offering a timely and relevant educational context.

Aligned with the class subject, the scenarios contributed significantly to the development of children's awareness and critical thinking.



Scenarios 3, 9, 12 & 14: How can we improve the implementation of the rights of the children?/ How do we include refugees in planet Spork?/Bring the image to life/Be a critical thinker!

The large percentage of students with personal connections to the refugee situation in Greece heightened their sensitivity towards scenarios 3, 9, 12 & 14.

Given the presence of refugees on the island of Lesbos, the scenarios sparked discussions and challenged negative attitudes, making them both easy and interesting for the students.

The inclusion of a scenario discussing fake news contributed to the development of critical thinking among the students.

Overall comments:

Students particularly enjoyed group activities, such as working together to write a story based on images and expressing their feelings through drawings related to the scenarios.

The digital nature of the game and the process of choosing the right answer through class discussions resonated well with the students, aligning with their familiarity with digital platforms.

"It also helped that the nature of the game had no competitive element at all as they were hardly concerned with the points they collected." (Greek teacher)

The scenario addressing LGBTQI rights and the conversation about online interactions with strangers garnered notable interest, with some students revealing personal experiences related to online video games.

The students expressed a desire for the game to last longer, with over half of them inquiring about accessing it for personal use at home.

The students, accustomed to first-person games, found enjoyment in solving puzzles, although some guidance was needed to direct attention towards optional puzzles.

The students actively sought involvement, expressing a preference for assuming the role of students directing the game.

In summary, the engagement with the educational game and its scenarios showcases a multifaceted impact, ranging from heightened awareness of social issues to the enjoyment derived from interactive and collaborative learning experiences. The positive reception and enthusiasm displayed by the students underscore the potential of educational games in fostering not only knowledge acquisition but also critical thinking and empathy.

Educational game & scenarios: areas for improvement

While the educational game and its scenarios have demonstrated significant value in engaging students and promoting awareness of children's rights, a critical examination reveals areas where enhancements can be made. The feedback from both students and educators provides valuable insights into the challenges faced and potential areas for improvement.



Game & functionalities:

Participants noted a desire for improvements in graphics and functionality, suggesting that a more visually appealing and seamlessly functioning game could enhance the overall experience.

It is suggested that after two incorrect answers, players should be shown the correct answer in a way that ensures

they comprehend it. This adjustment aims to address the learning needs of children with difficulties or indifference, ensuring a more effective learning process.

Educational scenarios:

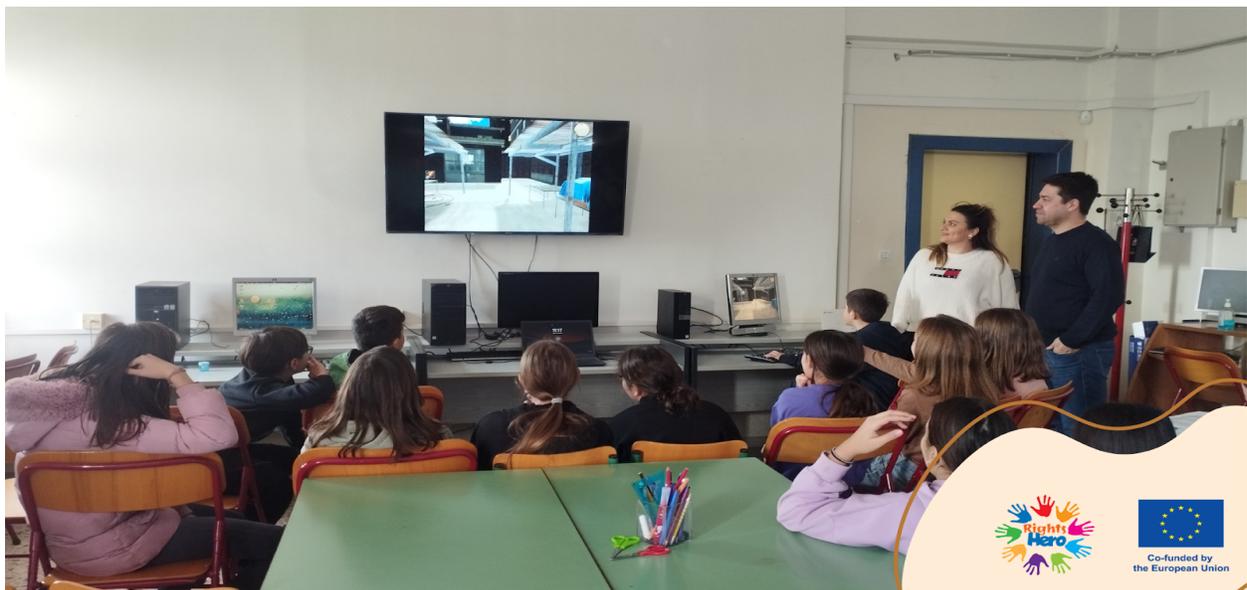
Teachers recommended tailoring scenarios to situations more familiar to the students. For instance, the scenario involving a seemingly Muslim girl facing restrictions in attending school was perceived as foreign and challenging to understand. Aligning scenarios with the students' own experiences can enhance relevance and comprehension.

The lack of inclusive sex education training in primary schools and parental objections to certain topics indicate a need for sensitivity in incorporating such content. This necessitates a careful approach to avoid conflicting with institutional constraints and parental concerns.

Participants propose enriching the educational activities with additional audio-visual content and incorporating more "artistic" activities. This enhancement aims to make learning more engaging and cater to diverse learning styles.

The recommendation for more levels specifically focused on children with disabilities suggests a need for a deeper exploration of this critical aspect of children's rights.

The scenario addressing the freedom of sexuality in Area 3 posed challenges and discomfort among the students. Addressing this issue requires careful consideration of cultural sensitivities and appropriate framing to ensure a positive learning experience.



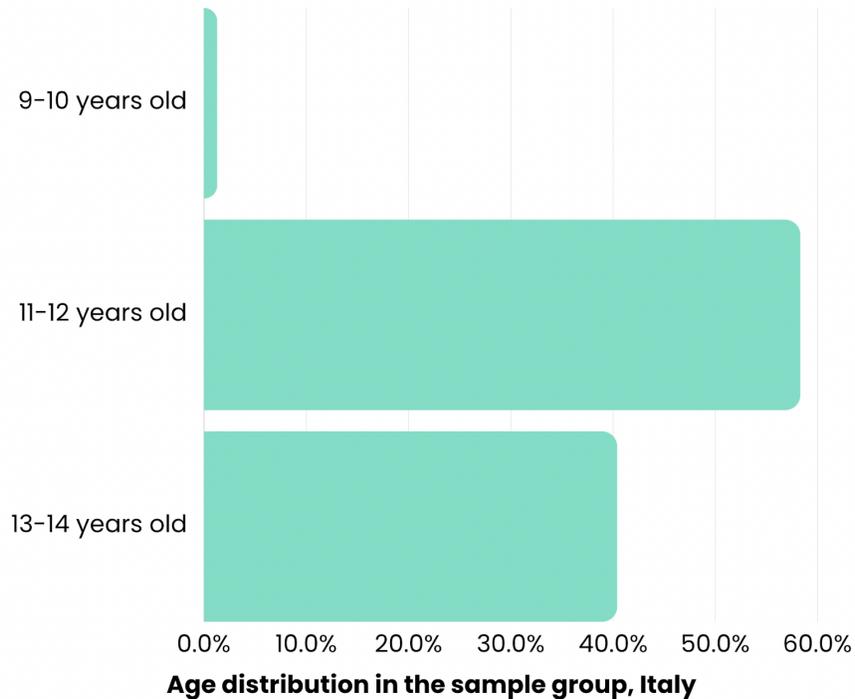
Complex topics such as child labor, LGBTI rights, and girls' right to education were perceived as requiring more time for thorough discussion. Acknowledging this, educators propose allocating more time for these critical discussions, acknowledging their complexity and the need for nuanced understanding.

In conclusion, the identified areas for improvement serve as valuable insights for refining the educational game and scenarios. Addressing these suggestions can contribute to a more effective, inclusive, and culturally sensitive educational experience that aligns with the diverse needs and perspectives of the students.

- Italy

Data collection

This research was conducted on a diverse sample comprising 223 students and 19 teachers from various educational institutions, offering a comprehensive and representative perspective on national attitudes towards children's rights.



Initial knowledge of childrens' rights

The 5 rights that children in Italy mentioned the most are:

- Right to education
- Right to play
- Right to have a family and home
- Right to be fed
- Right to have a name

The recognition of the right to education among Italian children highlights the value placed on learning and academic opportunities. It underscores the acknowledgment that access to quality education is essential for personal growth, empowerment, and future success. This awareness aligns with international frameworks advocating for universal education as a fundamental human right.

When questioned about their **willingness and confidence in advocating for their own rights and those of other children**, the responses varied. While a notable percentage expressed agreement or complete agreement with feeling brave enough to protect their rights and those of others, there were also instances of uncertainty and disagreement. This suggests a spectrum of self-assertion attitudes among Italian children, reflecting varying levels of confidence and awareness in asserting their rights.

"The children had the opportunity to exercise their critical thinking and reasoning skills on sensitive and complex topics. Many of them felt that their opinion and views mattered, and that they could learn something by playing and testing themselves." (Teacher from Italy)

Concerning the **awareness of seeking help and reporting concerns**, a significant portion of respondents expressed positive attitudes. A considerable percentage indicated agreement or complete agreement with knowing how to ask for help and report instances that feel wrong. This indicates a foundational understanding among Italian children regarding the importance of seeking assistance and reporting issues when necessary, contributing to their safety and well-being.



I know how to ask for help and tell someone if I see or experience something that doesn't feel right.

Italian children demonstrated favorable attitudes towards **respecting the rights of their peers**. A majority expressed agreement or complete agreement with the notion of respecting other children's rights. This reflects a culture of empathy and consideration among Italian youth, emphasizing the importance of mutual respect and understanding in fostering harmonious relationships and social cohesion.

Regarding the belief that **every child should have the opportunity to attend school regardless of gender, origin, or appearance**, the survey results indicate a high level of agreement among respondents, with 68.16% completely agreeing with this statement. This demonstrates a strong recognition of the importance of inclusive education and equal access to learning opportunities. However, it is notable that a small percentage (0.90%) express disagreement, suggesting the presence of differing perspectives or potential barriers to understanding the significance of inclusive education.



Similarly, the findings regarding the importance of **including children with disabilities** in community activities highlight a prevailing sentiment of support and inclusion. A majority of respondents (63.23%) completely agree with the statement, emphasizing the value of ensuring equal participation and opportunities for all members of society. While a minority (2.24%) express disagreement, the overall trend indicates a positive attitude toward promoting inclusivity and supporting children with disabilities in community settings.

*"It was truly significant to observe that, during the implementation in the classroom, one of the children with special needs, among the most difficult cases, was among the best at playing the video game, also deserving the teacher's praise. In that situation, perhaps for the first time, the child was rewarded at school for his own ability."
(Teacher from Italy)*



"it is really important to help and include kids with disabilities so they can be a part of everything in our community."

Childrens' knowledge and attitudes after the activities

The data collected before and after the activities highlights both the shifts in awareness and the reinforcement of certain fundamental principles.

Before the activities, the right to education was universally acknowledged as fundamental by the participating children. Post-activity analysis revealed a reaffirmation of this right, with a significant portion of students recognizing it as a cornerstone of their rights. Similarly, the right to play, although initially recognized, gained further prominence after

engaging with the educational activities, emphasizing its importance in the context of children's rights.

The initial findings indicated a strong awareness of the right to have a family and home among the children. This sentiment was echoed in the post-activity data, demonstrating a consistent understanding of the significance of these rights in ensuring the well-being and stability of children. Additionally, the recognition of basic needs, such as the right to be fed, remained prevalent, underscoring the children's understanding of essential provisions necessary for their growth and development.

A notable shift in attitudes was observed regarding children's confidence in asserting their rights and advocating for themselves and others. While there was a varied response initially, with some uncertainty and skepticism, the post-activity data indicated a more assured stance among the children. A significant percentage expressed confidence in protecting their rights and those of their peers, reflecting a growing sense of self-assurance and empowerment fostered by the educational activities.



I know how to ask for help and tell someone if I see or experience something that doesn't feel right.

The data revealed an enhanced awareness of gender equality and inclusivity following the activities. Specifically, the children demonstrated a heightened understanding of the importance of ensuring equal opportunities for education, irrespective of gender or background. Moreover, there was a notable increase in the recognition of the significance of including children with disabilities in all aspects of community life, reflecting a more inclusive and empathetic perspective among the participants.



“it is really important to help and include kids with disabilities so they can be a part of everything in our community.”

The engagement with scenarios addressing issues such as privacy and the use of social media facilitated critical reflections among the children. While these topics initially elicited varied responses, the post-activity data indicated a deeper understanding of the implications of digital rights and the importance of responsible online behavior. The children showcased a heightened awareness of the risks associated with unchecked social media use, underscoring the need for digital literacy and protection of privacy rights.

*"Thanks to the game, the students have had the opportunity to understand why the ban on using the mobile phone in class, or in any case the request to use it little and only in specific cases is a way of protecting their rights, and not just a negative prescription."
(Teacher from Italy)*

Educational game & scenarios: most engaging aspects

The implementation of the educational game and accompanying scenarios in Italy has yielded valuable insights into the most engaging aspects of children's rights education. By analyzing the experiences of students and educators, we can identify the scenarios that resonated most strongly with participants and contributed significantly to their learning journey.

Scenario 1: Are the children allowed to work?

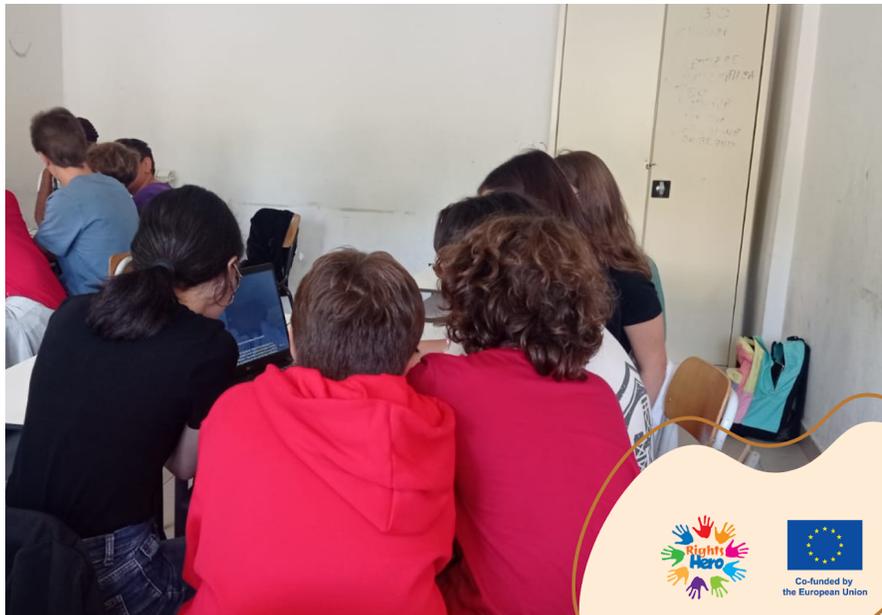
The first scenario addressing child labor sparked considerable debate and reflection among students. Initially, many pupils were surprised to learn that child labor is not solely a problem in distant, underdeveloped countries but also prevalent in their own communities. This realization prompted deep contemplation and heightened awareness of social issues affecting children locally and globally.

Scenarios 7 & 9: Should the migrants go back to their countries?/How do we include refugees in planet Spork?

The scenarios focusing on migration and cultural diversity prompted meaningful discussions, particularly in classes with a significant presence of students with migratory backgrounds. With the guidance of educators, students addressed these complex issues with a commendable degree of awareness, fostering empathy and understanding of the challenges faced by migrant children.

Scenarios 4 & 5: Can everybody play in the playground?/Why is integration of children with disability important?

The reflection on disability and inclusion, guided by support teachers, facilitated critical thinking and cooperative learning activities. By adopting playful methods, such as those presented in Scenario 5, students engaged deeply with the topic, developing empathy and advocating for the rights of children with special needs.



These scenarios complemented existing learning paths on cultural awareness and educational inclusion, enriching the students' educational experience.

Overall findings:

Overall, the implementation of the game and scenarios has led to a notable increase in children's awareness of various rights issues, including the status of migrant children, discrimination, conditions of disability, and labor exploitation. By addressing these topics in an interactive and engaging manner, students demonstrated a greater understanding of complex social issues and a heightened sense of empathy towards marginalized groups. Moreover, the activities served as a catalyst for critical reflection and self-awareness, paving the way for continued learning and advocacy for children's rights.

The most engaging aspects of the educational game and scenarios lie in their ability to foster meaningful discussions, promote empathy, and empower students to advocate for social justice and equality. By incorporating these interactive learning tools into classroom settings, educators can effectively engage students in children's rights education and inspire positive change in their communities.

Educational game & scenarios: areas for improvement

While the educational game and scenarios have proven to be valuable tools for developing critical thinking and fostering awareness of children's rights, several areas for improvement have been identified to enhance their effectiveness and accessibility. Teachers have highlighted critical points related to technical aspects and content complexity, which require attention to optimize the learning experience for students.



One of the primary concerns raised by teachers is the length and complexity of the texts within the game. Lengthy text passages can negatively impact children's attention levels

and cognitive engagement, as they may struggle to process information in a linear manner while navigating a multimedia environment. To address this issue, texts should be revised and streamlined to ensure clarity and conciseness, making them more accessible and engaging for young learners.

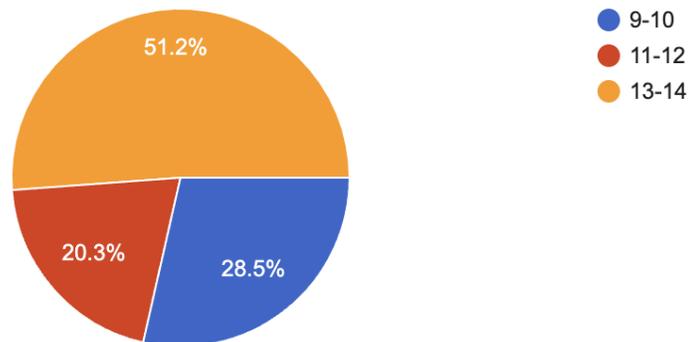
In addition to text length, the content of the game and scenarios should be reviewed to ensure accuracy and relevance to the target audience. Topics addressed are complex and sensitive, requiring careful consideration of language and context to facilitate understanding. Furthermore, accessibility is a key concern, particularly regarding the limited availability of laptops and fixed devices in Italian schools. To overcome this barrier, the game should be optimized for tablets and smartphones, enabling broader access and dissemination among students.

While the game and scenarios cover a range of important rights issues, there is a need for a more comprehensive approach to ensure all relevant topics are addressed. Teachers express a desire to continue using the game beyond the project implementation period, indicating the potential for sustained engagement and learning. To fully exploit the educational potential of the game, a broader spectrum of rights should be integrated into the curriculum, allowing for deeper exploration and analysis.

- Romania

Data collection

The research was conducted on a diverse sample comprising 2410 students and 113 teachers from various educational institutions, offering a comprehensive and representative perspective on national attitudes towards children's rights.



Initial knowledge of childrens' rights

The participants' engagement in activities associated with children's rights reveals a significant divergence, with 38.5% acknowledging participation and 61.5% indicating non-participation. The noticeable split in participation rates underscores the need for targeted strategies to enhance engagement and raise awareness about children's rights activities among the participants.

When asked about specific rights, participants frequently mentioned the following:

- The right to life, family, identity.
- The right to education.
- The right to health, protection, shelter, and food.
- The right to freedom.
- The right to opinion and expression.

The prevalent mention of these fundamental rights reflects a foundational understanding among participants, but efforts can be directed to ensure a more comprehensive awareness of a broader spectrum of children's rights.

Regarding the self-perception of protecting their own rights and those of other children (“I feel brave enough to protect my own rights and the rights of other kids”), participants varied in their responses, with some strongly disagreeing (2.2%), disagreeing (4.8%), expressing uncertainty (15.1%), agreeing (30.6%), or completely agreeing (23.8%). The percentage of those who expressed confidence in protecting their rights indicates a positive trend in self-advocacy.



"I feel brave enough to protect my own rights and the rights of other kids."

When assessing their awareness of **seeking help and reporting concerns**, approximately 72% of participants affirmed that they know how to do so appropriately. The positive disposition towards self-advocacy is a promising finding, as this self-assurance aligns with the goals of empowering children to assert themselves and contribute to a supportive community. Further investigation could explore the factors contributing to the varying degrees of self-advocacy across age groups.

Participants' attitudes towards **respecting the rights of other children** ranged from strong disagreement (3%) to complete agreement (58.2%). The overwhelmingly positive attitudes toward respecting other children's rights suggest a strong foundation for fostering a culture of mutual respect and inclusivity.



“It's a good idea to respect other children's rights.”

Concerning the **confidence in expressing thoughts and ideas**, participants responded as follows: 5.5% strongly disagreed, 8.3% disagreed, 27.9% were uncertain, 33.6% agreed and 24.4% completely agreed. The variations in confidence levels indicate a potential area for targeted support, emphasizing the importance of creating an environment where all participants feel empowered to express themselves.

The overwhelmingly positive belief in inclusive education (**“I know that every kid should have the chance to go to school, no matter if they're a boy or girl, where they come from, or what they look like”**) suggests a strong foundation for creating learning environments that embrace diversity and cater to the needs of all children. 26.8% agreed and 62.3% completely agreed with the statement above.

“The most beautiful mini-scene created by the children was the one in which one of them was a special person who could not move, a child sat down, imagining that he had no legs and could not get on the bus, and other children had presented various reactions towards the “disabled student”, some laughed at him, others were indifferent, and others helped him. In the end, the “disabled child” confessed to everyone how difficult it was for him not to be able to move, and for those around him not to understand him and not to think that even though his legs are missing, he feels the pain very intensely when he is not helped when needed.” (Romanian teacher)

Childrens' knowledge and attitudes after the activities

When asked about feeling brave enough to protect their own rights and the rights of other children, responses varied, with 3.2% strongly disagreeing, 2.9% disagreeing, 15.7% being uncertain, 31.4% agreeing, and 46.5% completely agreeing.



"I feel brave enough to protect my own rights and the rights of other kids."

The substantial percentage of students completely agreeing with their ability to protect rights indicates a positive shift in self-perception. This newfound confidence aligns with the project's goal of empowering children to advocate for their rights and those of their peers.

Concerning the knowledge of seeking help and reporting concerns appropriately, responses ranged from 2.9% strongly disagreeing, 4% disagreeing, 12.9% being uncertain, 34% agreeing, and 46% completely agreeing.

The combined percentage increased to 80% after the activity, indicating a modest but positive shift in awareness.

Participants expressed their attitudes towards respecting other children's rights, with responses ranging from 3% strongly disagreeing, and 64.9% completely agreeing.

The project reinforced and maintained a high level of empathy and consideration for the rights of their peers.



“It's a good idea to respect other children's rights.”

Before, 64.7% agreed or completely agreed that they feel sure of themselves when sharing thoughts and ideas. The combined percentage increased to 71.1% after the activities, indicating a positive shift in students' confidence levels.

When expressing belief in the importance of every child having the chance to go to school, responses included 2.8% strongly disagreeing, 1.9% disagreeing, 5.8% being uncertain, 21.2% agreeing, and 68.1% completely agreeing.

The project reinforced the importance of equal educational opportunities, with a slight increase in agreement.



Participants indicated their belief in the importance of helping and including children with disabilities, with responses ranging from 3% strongly disagreeing, 2.8% disagreeing, 6.9% being uncertain, 22.6% agreeing, and 64.5% completely agreeing. The high percentage completely agreeing signifies a positive shift in attitudes towards inclusivity. This reflects

an improved understanding of the importance of including and supporting children with diverse needs.

Teachers noticed positive changes in students' attitudes towards children's rights following the use of the Rights Hero game and related activities. Students demonstrated increased awareness of equal rights, acceptance of peers with special needs, and a proactive approach to societal integration. The teachers' observations align with the project's objectives, indicating that the combination of the Rights Hero game and instructional materials effectively contributed to positive changes in students' attitudes towards children's rights.

“The greatest interest was for the right to work. They read the Convention and also searched the Romanian legislation. They were impressed and requested further information related to the rights of girls in different societies. We started a discussion about the right to education for girls and they were looking for information about Malala.” (Romanian teacher)

Students exhibited behavioral changes, including increased attention to cleanliness, recycling, and a heightened awareness of environmental issues. The discussions extended to topics such as ethnic tolerance, equality, and the rights of the child. The observed behavioral changes indicate that the project had a broader impact, fostering not only awareness of individual rights but also a sense of responsibility towards the environment and societal issues.



Educational game & scenarios: most engaging aspects

There were several educational scenarios which proved to be the most effective in addressing pertinent issues within the students' lives, fostering engagement, awareness, and a positive attitude towards children's rights.

Scenario 1: Are children allowed to work?

The prevalence of Roma students exploited by their families through work within the school made this scenario particularly relevant.

The teachers aimed to shed light on the exploitation within the community, emphasizing the importance of knowing when children have the right to work. Choosing a scenario tied to the students' daily lives aimed to encourage awareness and reflection on their own circumstances.

“The rights to work had the most impact because they realized that one of their colleagues who was sometimes absent to work during the day to help her family was most of the time doing hard work, which contravened her right to education. Another thing that attracted them very much was the involvement of the colleague with special educational needs who, like never before, was attentive, interested, and 100% involved in the activity.” (Romanian teacher)

Scenarios 4 & 5: Can everyone play on the playground? / Why is the integration of children with disabilities important?

The scenarios were chosen due to observed challenges in accepting differences among children. They aimed to promote inclusivity and emphasize the importance of supporting and befriending disabled peers.

With students with disabilities at both class and school levels, the scenarios aimed to create empathy and awareness about the significance of inclusive play. Addressing contemporary issues relevant to the students' lives, the scenarios resonated with their experiences and encouraged engagement.

Scenario 3: How can we improve the implementation of children's rights?

The teachers noted students' good knowledge of their rights but identified instances of non-compliance in various situations. The scenario aimed to explore solutions and improve the implementation of children's rights.

Providing an opportunity to identify solutions within the school context, students' proposals focused on increasing activities related to children's rights.

Scenario 8: How can we express our opinion?

The teachers believed in their role to educate students in the spirit of free expression, considering freedom of expression as a fundamental right.

The scenario aimed to enhance communication in teacher-student and student-student relationships, fostering openness and free expression. Tailored for the students' age group, the scenario addressed their unfamiliarity with critically assessing information from various sources.



Scenarios 13 & 15: Put the phone down / What social media games do you play?

The teachers chose these scenarios due to concerns about the negative impact of phone games on children's psycho-emotional development.

Students wanted clarification on certain ambiguities related to phone games, showcasing a desire to understand modern challenges. These scenarios were perceived as addressing the real needs and concerns of the students, making them particularly engaging.

Overall Findings:

The students' enjoyment of the game was evident, driven by factors such as the challenging nature of the tasks, teamwork, and the discovery of rights they were not aware of. The gamified aspects, including earning points and discovering hidden elements, contributed to sustained engagement among the students.

The scenarios effectively facilitated discussions, role-playing, and poster-making, creating a dynamic learning environment. Teachers noted students' enthusiasm, active participation, and the positive impact on their behavior and attitudes towards children's rights.

While certain aspects, like filling out questionnaires, were less favored, the overall sentiment was positive, with students expressing a desire for more activities of this nature.

Educational game & scenarios: areas for improvement

Following the teachers' feedback and insights gained from implementing the "Rights Hero" game and scenarios, several key areas for improvement at the national level have been identified.

Game & functionalities



The teachers highlighted the need for expanding the game's content by adding more levels and diverse scenarios. This expansion should also extend the duration of activities over a more extended period, ensuring sustained engagement. To address accessibility challenges, especially in rural areas, teachers recommended making the game available for tablets and smartphones, enabling a broader reach.

Clearer explanations and additional content were deemed necessary to enhance the game's complexity, particularly related to international conventions. The teachers emphasized the importance of incorporating taboo subjects, such as gender equality and digital protection, with more in-depth explanations and scenarios. This inclusive approach aims to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of diverse rights.

Lastly, there was a call for specific guidance within the game on actions and resources available to children if they believe their rights are being violated. This addition ensures that the game not only educates children about their rights but also empowers them to take concrete actions when faced with rights violations.

Educational scenarios

The teachers emphasized the need for a more balanced focus on both rights and obligations. They suggested incorporating scenarios that highlight the reciprocal nature of rights, fostering a sense of responsibility among students. Additionally, there was a call for more activities aimed at promoting open expression, ensuring that students actively listen to and respect diverse opinions. The teachers recommended exploring ways to integrate topics relevant to Roma students' experiences, providing scenarios that resonate with their challenges and rights.

While the "Rights Hero" game was designed to be accessible to students of various age groups, some participants found certain scenarios or topics to be more suitable for older students. Ensuring age-appropriate content and activities is essential for maximizing the impact of children's rights education initiatives and catering to the diverse needs and abilities of students.

Moreover, there was a consensus among teachers to introduce an optional subject in the school curriculum dedicated to teaching children about their rights. This would involve utilizing the "Rights Hero" game as an educational tool, ensuring a systematic and structured approach to children's rights education. Tailoring scenarios to local challenges, specifically addressing the integration of Roma students, would make the educational content more relevant and inclusive.

These recommendations underscore the importance of a nuanced and inclusive approach to children's rights education. By refining both the educational scenarios and the game's

functionalities, the "Rights Hero" initiative can offer a more impactful and comprehensive learning experience for students across the nation.

Impact

The project strategically focuses on enhancing the capacity of teachers to organize workshops and discussions in schools, using innovative tools such as the "Rights Hero" educational game, which imparts crucial knowledge about children's rights while captivating their interest.

The webinars provided teachers with in-depth insights into the game and its associated education scenarios, equipping them with the tools to facilitate engaging and informative workshops with their students.

- **Impact on civic engagement and democratic participation**

- **Increased sensitivity to social issues:**

The educational activities, particularly those addressing scenarios related to refugees and social inclusion, have contributed to a heightened sensitivity among students. This increased awareness is a positive precursor to fostering active civic engagement and a democratic mindset.

- **Discussion on human rights and inclusion:**

The scenarios related to children with disabilities, refugees, and LGBTQI rights have stimulated discussions among students. This dialogue not only enhances their understanding of human rights but also promotes inclusivity and diversity, essential components of democratic values.

The scenarios addressing the rights of Roma students have sparked discussions about societal responsibilities and inclusivity. Teachers noted that students, after engaging with these scenarios, showed increased awareness of the challenges faced by marginalized communities, leading to a more empathetic and inclusive mindset. This newfound awareness aligns with the principles of democratic participation by fostering a sense of responsibility towards creating a just and equitable society.

- **Participation in collaborative activities:**

The positive response to group activities, such as writing stories and drawing, reflects an inclination towards collaborative efforts. Such collaborative activities not only nurture teamwork but also encourage participation in communal initiatives, laying the groundwork for civic engagement.

➤ Interest in social justice issues:

The engagement with scenarios involving child labor, discrimination, and social justice issues indicates an emerging interest among students in understanding and addressing societal challenges. This interest is a promising sign for future civic involvement.

The recommendation to include taboo subjects in the scenarios, such as gender equality and digital protection, suggests an acknowledgment of the complex societal issues that influence civic engagement. By addressing these subjects, the program encourages students to critically engage with societal norms and challenges, promoting a democratic ethos grounded in equality and respect for diverse perspectives.

● Impact on children's awareness of their rights

The Rights Hero game and educational scenarios have had a significant impact on children's awareness of their rights in participating countries. Through interactive and engaging activities, students have gained a deeper understanding of their rights as outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The project has not only increased children's knowledge of their rights but has also empowered them to advocate for themselves and others in their communities.

➤ Increased recognition of fundamental rights:

The educational activities have positively influenced students' recognition of fundamental rights such as housing, education, and freedom. The consistent awareness of these basic rights is indicative of the effectiveness of educational interventions.

➤ Elevated understanding of inclusive education:

Scenarios addressing inclusive playgrounds for children with special needs have contributed to a deeper understanding of inclusive education. This awareness is crucial in fostering empathy and support for diverse learning environments.

The students' requests for more information and explanations regarding equal opportunities and the value of education for girls highlight the initiative's success in encouraging critical thinking about societal norms. This suggests that the program not only imparts knowledge but also stimulates curiosity and inquiry, fostering a generation of informed and empowered individuals.

➤ Improved knowledge of child labor:

The scenario focusing on child labor has led to a notable improvement in students' comprehension of this critical issue. The data suggests that the educational efforts have successfully conveyed the concept of child labor to the students.

➤ Improved critical thinking:

The interactive nature of the game encouraged students to think critically about complex social issues and consider different perspectives. Through discussions, debates, and reflective activities, students developed analytical skills and learned to evaluate situations based on the principles of children's rights, fostering empathy and understanding.

➤ Increased empowerment and self-advocacy:

The project empowered students to advocate for themselves and others by providing them with the knowledge and tools to assert their rights effectively. Students demonstrated increased confidence in expressing their opinions, seeking help when needed, and taking action to address violations of children's rights in their communities. The comparative analysis of pre- and post-activity data highlights the positive impact of these interventions, underscoring the value of continued efforts in children's rights education. As children's awareness and attitudes continue to evolve, ongoing initiatives aimed at promoting their rights and well-being remain essential in shaping a more equitable and inclusive society.

- Impact on teacher capacity

The implementation of children's rights education initiatives, such as the "Rights Hero" game, had varying impacts on teacher capacity across different contexts. While some teachers demonstrated enthusiasm and creativity in adapting the game to their classroom settings, others faced challenges in engaging with the material and integrating it into their curriculum. Overall, the project highlighted both the potential and the limitations of using educational games as a tool for promoting teacher capacity in children's rights education.

➤ Increased sensitivity to student needs:

Teachers have gained an increased sensitivity to the needs of students, as evidenced by their efforts to address learning difficulties and indifference among students. This adaptive approach enhances teacher capacity in tailoring educational content to diverse learning styles.

The recommendations provided by teachers, including the call for an optional subject in the curriculum dedicated to teaching children about their rights using the "Rights Hero" game, underscore their commitment to continuous improvement and a desire to enhance their capacity for delivering impactful education. The positive feedback from teachers suggests that the initiative has not only benefited students but has also contributed to the professional development of educators by providing them with a valuable resource for rights-based education.

➤ Facilitation of discussions on sensitive topics:

Teachers have successfully facilitated discussions on sensitive topics like sexuality, refugees, and child labor. This indicates a capacity to navigate complex subjects, fostering an environment conducive to open dialogue.

The teachers' role in guiding students through the scenarios, facilitating discussions, and interpreting complex concepts has enhanced their ability to navigate sensitive topics effectively. The program has provided teachers with a structured framework to teach children about their rights, supplementing traditional teaching methods.

➤ Utilization of technology:

The positive reception of the digital environment of the game showcases teachers' effective utilization of technology in the classroom. This reflects an enhanced capacity to incorporate innovative teaching methods, keeping students engaged in the learning process.

➤ Curriculum alignment

Teachers in some contexts struggled to align the content of the game and related activities with their curriculum requirements. The lack of clear guidelines and resources for integrating children's rights education into existing curricula posed a barrier to effective implementation and integration into the classroom.

➤ Professional collaboration

The implementation of the game and scenarios has facilitated opportunities for professional collaboration and networking among teachers. Through workshops, training sessions, and collaborative planning meetings, teachers have exchanged ideas, shared best practices, and supported each other in integrating children's rights education into their teaching practice. This professional collaboration has enhanced teachers' professional growth and contributed to a sense of collective responsibility for promoting children's rights in education.

Challenges & Opportunities in children's rights education

Challenges

- Navigating through cultural sensitivities, especially when addressing topics related to sexuality and diverse family structures, poses a challenge. Balancing the need for inclusivity with cultural considerations requires a delicate approach. Limited class time poses a constraint in providing the depth required for comprehensive discussions on these intricate subjects. The presence of parental objections to certain educational content, particularly in the realm of sex education, adds a layer of complexity. Collaborative efforts with parents and open communication become essential to find common ground.
- Catering to diverse learning needs and styles within a classroom setting is an ongoing challenge. Adapting educational materials and approaches to address different learning preferences requires continuous innovation and flexibility.
- Children's rights encompass a wide range of complex and nuanced issues, including poverty, discrimination, violence, and exploitation. Addressing these topics in a developmentally appropriate manner can be challenging for educators, particularly when navigating sensitive or controversial subjects. Finding age-appropriate ways to discuss these issues while promoting critical thinking and empathy requires careful planning and support.
- The recommendation for an optional subject in the school curriculum dedicated to teaching children about their rights signifies a recognition of institutional barriers. Integrating such subjects requires overcoming bureaucratic hurdles and aligning educational policies with the evolving needs of students.
- The preference for making the game available on tablets and smartphones highlights an existing challenge related to access to technology. Not all schools, especially in rural or disadvantaged areas, have the necessary infrastructure, posing a potential barrier to the implementation of technology-dependent educational tools.
- Factors such as conflicting schedules, curriculum constraints, and perceived relevance of the topic contributed to low participation rates among teachers in countries such as Denmark. The highly digitalized nature of education in Denmark, coupled with a saturated market for teaching materials, presented additional challenges in garnering interest in the game.
- Many educators lack formal training in children's rights education, leaving them ill-equipped to effectively integrate these principles into their teaching practice. Without adequate training and support, teachers may struggle to create inclusive

and rights-based learning environments and may inadvertently reinforce discriminatory or oppressive attitudes and behaviors.

Opportunities

- The use of interactive educational games presents a dynamic opportunity to engage students in the learning process. The game format allows for immersion, fostering experiential learning and enhancing retention of information. The enthusiasm displayed by students in various activities, including educational games, role-playing, and poster-making, presents an opportunity to leverage innovative and engaging teaching methods. Such approaches can enhance the effectiveness of children's rights education.
- Collaborating with parents in children's rights education opens a gateway for mutual understanding and support. Creating channels for dialogue and involving parents in the educational journey can bridge gaps and enhance the effectiveness of the program.
- Integrating the local context into educational content provides an opportunity to make children's rights more relatable. Addressing scenarios that align with the students' own experiences enhances understanding and fosters a sense of ownership.
- Investing in the professional development of educators equips them with the skills and knowledge required to navigate complex topics. Training programs focused on cultural sensitivity, inclusive teaching, and effective communication can empower educators.
- Teachers who participated in the project showed creativity in adapting the game scenarios and creating complementary activities to promote civic engagement. The involvement of international teachers, such as those from Germany, highlights the potential for cross-cultural exchange and collaboration in promoting civic awareness and democratic values.
- The challenges encountered in Denmark highlight the need for continued reflection and research on effective strategies for children's rights education. By exploring the underlying factors contributing to low teacher engagement and relevance perception, stakeholders can develop targeted interventions to address these challenges and maximize the impact of children's rights education initiatives. Despite time constraints, the potential for a long-term impact on students' awareness and attitudes towards children's rights is significant. Cultivating a

culture of respect and empathy lays the foundation for a more rights-conscious generation.

- All participating countries have strong legal frameworks for the protection of children's rights, including the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This legislative support provides a foundation for children's rights education and advocacy efforts, empowering educators to promote children's rights principles in schools and communities.

By acknowledging and addressing challenges while leveraging opportunities for innovation and collaboration, educators can pave the way for a more informed, empathetic, and empowered generation with a deep understanding of their rights and responsibilities.

Recommendations for stakeholders for enhancing project impact and sustainability

This chapter provides key recommendations for stakeholders involved in the "Rights Hero" project, aiming to optimize its impact and ensure long-term sustainability. The insights gathered from the research process, including initial and final questionnaires, workshop implementations, and teacher reporting, as well as the observations of the project team are the basis of these recommendations.

➤ Integrate the "Rights Hero" game into national curriculums

We recommend collaboration with education authorities in each country to integrate the "Rights Hero" educational game and associated materials into the official curriculum for students aged 9-14. Curriculum integration will ensure broader access to the project's benefits, embedding the content within the formal educational framework and increasing its long-term impact.

➤ Offer continuous professional development for teachers

We recommend providing ongoing training and professional development opportunities for teachers to deepen their understanding of the "Rights Hero" project and enhance their facilitation skills. To address the challenges identified and build teacher capacity in children's rights education, ongoing professional development opportunities and support should be provided. This may include workshops, seminars, and online resources focused on integrating children's rights into the curriculum and developing pedagogical approaches that promote student engagement and critical thinking. Well-prepared teachers contribute significantly to the effectiveness of the project. Continuous development ensures that educators can adapt to evolving educational landscapes.

➤ Expand geographic reach

We recommend the exploration of opportunities to expand the geographic reach of the project to reach more schools and diverse communities, fostering cross-cultural collaboration. Expanding the project's reach increases its potential impact and allows for the exchange of diverse perspectives and experiences among students and teachers.

➤ Organize community engagement events

Organize community engagement events to showcase students' projects and raise awareness about the "Rights Hero" initiative within local communities. Community involvement enhances project visibility, promotes a sense of civic pride, and encourages ongoing support for the initiative.

➤ **Invest in digital education**

Stakeholders, including governments, educational institutions, and NGOs, should prioritize investment in digital education tools like the Rights Hero game. This includes allocating resources for the development of educational games, training for teachers on their effective use, and ensuring access to necessary technology in schools, such as laptops and tablets.

Implementing these recommendations will not only amplify the immediate impact of the "Rights Hero" project but also contribute to its sustained success. By embracing these strategies, stakeholders can ensure that the project continues to empower and educate young minds, fostering a generation of informed and engaged global citizens.

Conclusions

The findings from the impact report underscore the significant role of children's rights education initiatives in promoting awareness, understanding, and engagement among students and educators. Through the implementation of the "Rights Hero" game, students have gained valuable insights into their rights and responsibilities, empowering them to become active participants in their communities. Furthermore, teachers have demonstrated commendable dedication in facilitating these initiatives despite various challenges, highlighting the importance of ongoing support and professional development opportunities.

Importantly, children's rights education has not only enhanced students' awareness of their rights but has also fostered critical thinking, empathy, and a sense of social responsibility. By equipping young people with the knowledge and skills to advocate for their rights and the rights of others, these initiatives contribute to the cultivation of a more just and equitable society.

The impact of the game and scenarios on teacher capacity extends beyond the duration of the project, with many teachers expressing a commitment to continuing their professional development in the field of children's rights education. By incorporating lessons learned from the project into their ongoing teaching practice, teachers are contributing to a culture of continual learning and improvement within the education system. This sustainable impact ensures that the benefits of the game and scenarios are felt long-term, both in terms of teacher capacity and student learning outcomes.

However, the impact report also identifies areas for improvement, including the need for greater access to educational resources, ongoing teacher training, and sustained engagement efforts. Addressing these challenges will require continued collaboration between educators, policymakers, and civil society organizations to ensure that children's rights education remains a priority in educational settings worldwide.

Overall, the findings of the impact report underscore the transformative potential of children's rights education in promoting democratic values, social justice, and civic participation. By investing in these initiatives and prioritizing the rights of all children, we can create a more inclusive and equitable society for future generations.

Credits

This report is a key deliverable of the Erasmus+ KA2 project “The Rights Hero” (2021-1-EL01-KA220-SCH-000032652), coordinated by The Network for Children’s Rights (Greece) and implemented with the support of CISS (Italy), Group of the European Youth for Change – GEYC (Romania), Action Synergy (Greece), Omega Technology (Greece), Crossing Borders (Denmark), 49th Primary School of Athens (Greece).

Editor, Researcher: Alexandra Peca (Romania)

Researchers: Alexia Karapatsia (Greece), Josephine Fröhlich (Denmark), Valentina Dănăilă (Romania), Pietro Di Pietro (Italy).



Co-funded by
the European Union

PARTNERS:



The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflect the view only of the authors, and the Commission can not be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.