

Leverage for Go Deep 2020

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GO
DEEP

Highlights and key insights

Summing up the juice

Understanding, measuring and managing one’s social impact is quite a journey and if you really Go Deep into it, a journey well beyond linear theories, momentary snap shots and easy answers. As we travelled in 2020 through our Go Deep social impact landscape, we’ve realized that **stories matter**, that **complexity is an invitation** for exploration and that we should always and continuously **revisit our own (un)conscious assumptions and goals** about the people and the communities we work in. In this summary report you will find our highlights and key insights from this deep dive.

 **GO DEEP**  **SIA Tool**  This Go Deep Social Impact Assessment Tool helps to measure the transformational impact of Go Deep game played in a community. Please fill up the fields when playing a game.

Where is it happening? (City & Country) What neighborhood or community?

Aprox. total number of participants Max number of participants at a time How many nationalities playing?

Organization holding the game Coordinators from Go Deep team Number of facilitators

Vulnerable communities participating Stories from participants Highlighted transformations

Thanks!

So, let's start from the beginning, let's start with the 'WHY'...



We know that playing the game changes people, changes environments, it changes things. We know it in our hearts, we see it with our eyes, we can feel it and sometimes we can even touch it. It echoes in the tears, the smiles, the hugs, the silences or the in the words of those who enter the game and care to share their journeys with others. However, the questions we ask ourselves are not if the game has an impact, or if that impact has a SROI¹ of 1, 2 or 10, but rather what impact it really has on the lives of the people with whom we've shared it? And, how does it happen? Is it truly different for everyone or are there common patterns we can identify? Moreover, towards what is that change going? Can we improve the game if we understand better its impact on people and communities? **Will that understanding allow us to play a more conscious role and re-direct**

our efforts not only for change but more importantly towards transformation, i.e., change with a purpose and a heading? These are the 'WHY's that moves us in this exploration that is to understand individual and collective transformation.

And we start with the 'WHY' as we realized throughout the process that having a clear bearing from the start is key to make effective decisions about which paths to take, to keep focus and motivation.

The 'WHY' is intimately connected with questioning of the 'to whom' are we doing this? Is it for us? For our stakeholders? **Which stakeholders are we talking about?**

Primarily understanding the impact of game is crucial for us: Go Deep trainers, facilitators and developers. After all, we designed it so we should know what it does to the world it touches. Secondly we believe that this knowledge is of vital importance for all of those community leaders, builders and connectors which are inviting the game into their social environments. After all, they should know what they are bringing into their communities. Thirdly and lastly, we also believe that the wider stakeholder community that supports, promotes and disseminates the game is motivated and interested in knowing more about what are they supporting and which kind of world they are helping to build.

If you don't know what you have, you can't know what you need

In 2020 we didn't start from scratch. Our journey of understanding the impact of the Go Deep game had already started in 2017 within the European project GoToDiversity and the task of building a Theory of Change (ToC hereafter). This was our first attempt to systematize how exactly change happens during the game and also to analyze if we were actually having the impact we believed we had.

So, **we had a Theory**, validated by empirical data from hundreds of answers from all over Europe, but by most indicators it was **not being used or useful for us or the wider network**. So, revisiting the Go Deep ToC with fresh eyes became our starting point. Soon we realized that more than the upgrades and improvements suggested in the "Conclusion and next steps" we needed a deeper revision. The ToC approach had lead us into interesting avenues but it ultimately failed to really allow us to navigate those portals of transformation that we open once we start playing the cards. Three key reflections on what we had built were crucial for this next journey:



- 1) Overcoming linear simplicity: Activities lead to outputs that eventually allow us to reach outcomes and potentially create impact. That's the fundamental structure of ToC approaches. It is simple, easy and linear. The challenge is that reality tends to be a bit more messy, uncertain, unpredictable and complex than that. Particularly in the later steps (outcomes & impacts) and when you accept the dynamic iterative nature of such relationships. So, if the ToC is to serve our understanding of social impact we need to integrate non-linear, non-direct causality complexity;
- 2) Unhiding (un)conscious assumptions: behind any theory there are many underlying assumptions (values, worldviews, cultural, social, economic, etc) that frame our thoughts and words, and which are not always clearly stated and conscious. In our ToC the assumptions were there, just hidden behind statements and ideas and sometimes unquestioned and unconscious. So, a new ToC needed to shine a new light into those assumptions, question them and move beyond them;
- 3) A methodology that serves: in order to empirically support and validate our ToC we designed a method of interviews and questionnaires to relevant stakeholders pre, post and during the game to assess a number of variables. This snapshot, mostly quantitative approach, was found to be highly resource demanding, not properly integrated in the game itself and not providing an image on HOW change happens. So a radically new approach and new methodology was needed.

¹ SROI = Social Return On Investment

From Theories of Change to Narratives of Transformation (NoT)

The popular business management motto "you can't manage what you can't measure" has spilled way far beyond the 'business world' and has become an underlying mantra from public institutions, to third sector organizations, to your personal life and your relationships. It is also one of the key assumptions behind the ToC approach and therefore in our initial quest to understand our impact on people and communities we set out to measure, as best as we could, the changes that we witnessed. We established indicators, built proxy's whenever we couldn't reach a comparable metric and tried to somehow quantify and qualify such things as "level of social inclusion", "feeling of belonging", "togetherness". By way of questionnaires and interviews to participants and facilitators we gathered snap shots of the change process, collected some stories and weave them together into a consistent and coherent Theory of Change that matched our assumptions, expectations and envisioned societal transformation. We measured something but we didn't truly understand much of what was really going on between snapshot 1 and 2 and 3. Moreover, we felt that the ToC system and process was neither empowering to those living the games and the changes within, nor truly acknowledging our own biases, assumptions and projections.

So, step back, rethink, redesign. Focus not on measuring and managing but on understanding, after all these are complex social iterations, dynamic transformational processes that we know too little about.

And this is our **own transformational moment** regarding the understanding of our impact in the people and communities with whom we play. **From measuring to understanding, from projecting to listening, from managing to facilitating.**

This is where we choose to let the players tell us about their visions of transformation, to let them build their own theory of how that happens, to weave and co-create those stories with us. This is our new approach: from **Theories of Change (ToC)** towards **Narratives of Transformation (NoT)**.

Instead of **building Theories** we focus on **co-creating storylines**; instead of **measuring change** we focus on **understanding transformation**; instead of focusing on **specific activities and concrete outputs-outcomes** we place our attention in the intricate **connections and relationships** that move the processes of transition; instead of having the social impact assessment as an **external add-on** to the game we **embed it into the flow of the game** itself so that it becomes an unavoidable step in our journey. Their stories become our common story which is our social impact..

Sharing our stories

Our stories are our primary meaning-making mechanism. They frame how we see and feel reality within and around us. And the stories we choose to tell and re-tell frame our lives. So, stories matter. Even the words within those stories matter. So, we listen and we harvest and we weave them together, from the individual, to the community, to the collective. We focus on these stories because they carry the feelings and the beliefs, and they will determine the behaviors.



They can be told with words, with movements, with colors or shapes. That doesn't matter. The message, the narrative being told behind the shape and the form matters and that's how we see, and feel, harvest and understand a little bit of the impact that the Go Deep game has in each soul. **That's how we try to bring the invisible in.** And we redesigned the game to more consciously invite storytelling to be a part of the journey. This means, asking those travelling through the game not only to share with us their stories as we go along but also to question their own biases and assumptions; to reflect on what is really relevant to them (Most relevant impact approach); and also to identify the triggers and the connections that leveraged those changes. In sum, these were the changes introduced to the Go Deep Game following our 2020 social impact assessment process:

In the Getting started line we have:

- Introduced a new card “Learning to Listen”
- Reviewed cards 10 and 11 with new questions for reflection and more explicitly focus on assumptions/biases and storytelling;

In the Arrival line:

- Modify the title of card 3 to ‘Reflecting on our transformation’ and add new questions
- Modify cards 4 and 6 to focus on transformation

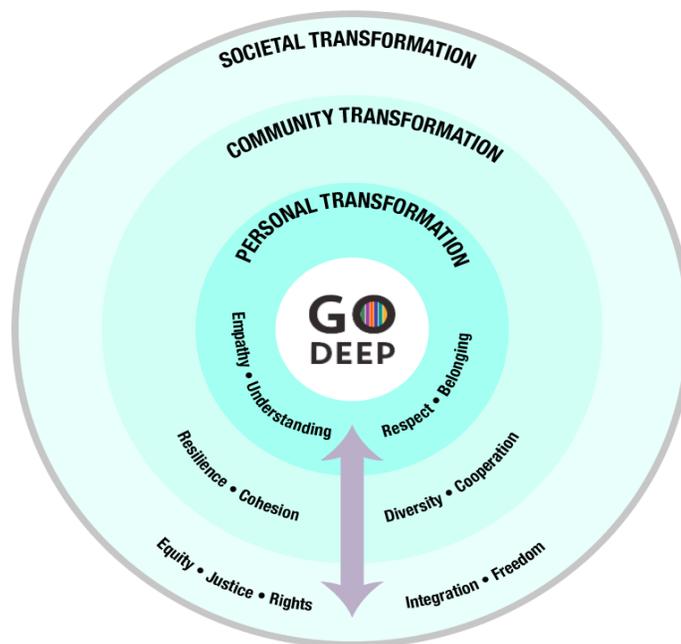
In the game dynamics:

- Added a new role for people who are responsible for these cards of the narrative of transformation.

Take aways for other organizations dealing with SIA

There are two important lessons from our process that we believe might have transferability to other organizations working with communities and wanting to better understand their social impact:

- 1) The first one is about stepping back and truly empowering and/or giving more space and possibilities to our stakeholders to have their own voices and ownership of their changes and transformations. This was particularly important for us in redefining the aim and the methods of our research and it represents a paradigm shift regarding the traditional Theory of Change and Social Impact Assessment approaches. With that shift we went from a linear causality model (activities-outcomes-outputs-impacts) to a social complex iterative non-linear system (narratives of transformation) using the Most Relevant Change approach, owned by the participants, during the game. We believe this might be relevant to other organizations as the journey into better understanding one's impact on people and communities does not necessarily need to involve ever more data, complicated tools and high research costs.
- 2) The second one is regarding external support and fresh eyes. As mentioned above we've felt that the contributions given to us from Iñigo - external invited consultant - were crucial to break apart from biased loops of thought and practice and step into significantly new ground. Of course, it's not only about bringing someone from outside but also choosing the right person that will enable breakthroughs and upgrade.



New cards for impact data collection

Here we include the new cards that have been created or transformed in order to feed the Social Impact Assessment Tool.

<p>GO DEEP</p> <p>9.5</p> <p>LEARNING TO LISTEN</p> <p>GETTING READY</p>	<h3>LEARNING TO LISTEN</h3> <p>Part 1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Sit quietly on your own and connect with yourself,2. Remember arriving to play the game - who you were when you arrived? Are you the same person? are you different? make a note on stickies of any changes you notice3. Now think about your journey so far- is there any change you want for yourself by the end of this experience, be brave and imagine it.4. Take some time to imagine the change has really happened, what would it feel like? look like? what would you do?5. Find a way to express this changed person- a drawing, a story, notes a poem, a dance anything that helps you be the change <p>Part 2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Find a partner and take turns- one person shows or speaks the changed person expression and2. The second person quietly listens with their ears, eyes, feelings and heart and asks why is it important? listens and writes down the persons answers3. Switch <p>Finally</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The facilitator puts two sheets of paper on the wall -what helped you feel listened? -what help you listen2. All at once everyone writes up their learning on the papers3. Get together in the large group and, if you want, share what you learned in card 9.5 about yourself and/or about listening and being listened to. <p> 40 MIN </p>
<p>GO DEEP</p> <p>3</p> <p>REFLECTING ON OUR TRANSFORMATION</p> <p>ARRIVING</p>	<h3>REFLECTING ON OUR TRANSFORMATION</h3> <p>Now that you've completed a whole line of the game we can close for now (until you play again!). It is important to stop and reflect in case we forget what we have done, what has worked and why! Reflecting helps us to develop awareness of the skills and talents that we used and can use again in all aspects of our life; it is empowering and helps us connect with the differences we have made, and our deepest inner resources.</p> <p>By yourself, reflect on the following questions and write/draw in the journal</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What was most joyful and exciting during the game?2. What was surprising or unexpected in a good way?3. What did you learn? Anchor your learning with drawings or poems or songs. Once you have it, reflect and name some of the skills that you feel you developed in the game.4. Did you feel a personal transformation happened through your participation in the game? If yes, what was transformed? What contributed to this transformation?5. Think about the envisioning you had about yourself in the Getting Ready and reflect what, if anything, from those visions manifested through the game?6. Harvesting: put a large sheet of paper on a wall and divide it in three columns. In the first column write "Personal Transformation" and leave the other two for the next card. Collect reflections from questions 3 to 5 and put them on the wall with adhesive notes. <p> INDIVIDUAL  20 MIN </p>

GO DEEP

4

LEARNING ABOUT US, THE GROUP AND THE COMMUNITY

ARRIVING

LEARNING ABOUT US, THE GROUP AND THE COMMUNITY

1. All together choose a facilitator to write the answers to the following questions on big sheets of paper:
2. What was most joyful and exciting during our group work and for the community?
3. What was surprising or unexpected in a good way?
4. What was most challenging and difficult for us as a group? How did we overcome it?
5. What was most challenging for the community?
6. Do you feel a transformation of the group and of the community happened through the game? If yes, what was transformed? What contributed to that transformation?
7. Think about the envisioning that you had about the group and the community in the Getting Ready and reflect what, if anything, from those visions manifested through the game?
8. Harvesting: in the two empty columns of the wall from previous card, write "Group Transformation" and "Community Transformation" and collect reflections from questions 6 and 7 with adhesive notes.

INDIVIDUAL  **20 MIN** 

Follow Go Deep Game Development

Go Deep game has been developing since 2016, you can see what have been the supporting projects and outcomes in the Go Deep Project website: <https://godeeproject.org/>