



Rise of Roffanova: The City Impact Challenge

Board Game Information and Facilitation Guide

In this document you will find everything you need to know about the *"Rise of Roffanova: The City Impact Challenge"* board game, including guidelines on how to facilitate a workshop with teachers, students or learning innovators.

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1. What is the Purpose of this Game?

The “Rise of Roffanova” **mimics the experience students can have in an impact-driven course**, where they work on a group assignment in collaboration with a societal partner to address a complex city challenge. The elements of the game are drawn based on the real-life experiences and stories of students, teachers, researchers, and learning innovators that are working in this context.

By stepping into the shoes of fictional student profiles, participants have a unique opportunity to **experience the challenges and opportunities of impact-driven education from the eyes of a student**, including group dynamics, teacher’s demands and feedback, the relationship with the societal partner and the complexities of the city challenge itself.

This experience sets a fertile ground for **deep and meaningful reflection with the participants**. How was the experience playing the game similar or different from their own educational experience? What personal values and strengths did they recognize in themselves while playing the game and how can they leverage them during a course? What can teachers do to support students through this journey? What type of learning environment do we have to create to make this happen? The exact direction of this reflection will depend on your target group.

2. Who are the Possible Target Groups for this Game?

The game is built on the foundations of the [learning landscape for impact driven education](#) and can be used for the following objectives and audiences:

Teachers: use the game to get teachers familiarized with impact-driven education and their role as teachers in such, either as their first contact with this type of education or as a tool to reflect and discuss about their own practice.

Students: use the game to encourage students who are about to start or just started with an impact-driven education experience to reflect on their collaboration style, identify their values when it comes to making a positive impact in the city and anticipate challenges and opportunities during their learning journey.

Learning innovators: use the game to let learning innovators experience the design principles of impact-driven education and think about how to support teachers in designing a supportive learning environment. This is also an invitation for them to experience how they can use a game format for educational innovation.



3. Game Details

Number of players: 3-5 per group

Time: 40-75 minutes

Conditions: Best played with a facilitator who guides participants. Use the facilitation guide to familiarize yourself with the gameplay first.

Materials: The game is available for anybody and can be easily downloaded and printed. The prints are reusable.

4. Marketing and Promotion

Use the following texts, if needed, to promote the workshop or event where you will play the game and engage your audience.

Marketing text

“Set in a futuristic city being attacked by an AI virus, in this game you step into the shoes of students taking the “The City Impact Challenge” course. Your assignment is clear: revive Roffanova by transforming it into a thriving and resilient city. Strategize with your peers, collect resources and activate crucial city locations to achieve your objective. As you try to make a positive impact on the city, you will navigate threatening AI glitches, challenging stakeholder demands and tricky university dynamics. The road to success requires teamwork, creativity and adaptability. Are you ready to make an impact?”

Short Invitation

“Immerse yourself in a city challenge where every decision counts, and distractions hide at every turn. The future of Roffanova rests in your hands: are you ready to make an impact?”

Poster

Download the poster to use on your webpage, social media platforms or e-mail invitations.

About the Creators and Contact Information

This game was developed in 2024 by Denise Levy Abeliuk ([Impact at the Core, Erasmus University Rotterdam](#)), Almar Bok ([Brûs Design](#)), Nadia Pepels ([Studio Nadia Nena](#)).



5. Facilitation Guide

This game is highly customizable. You are free to change, add, alter or remove elements of the game to make it fit your unique context. The outline presented in this guide can be used as a starting point.¹

Step 0: Design your Session

Start by defining your target group and objectives for your session. Depending on the number of participants you might play with one group or multiple groups at a time. In terms of space, consider one table per group playing the game.

Make sure to distribute your time wisely. You will need at least 40 minutes to play the game, but it can be easily played for 75 minutes. According to your objectives, make sure to save time for reflection: this is where deep learning happens.

A 1-hour workshop could be structured as follows:

- a. 5 minutes instructions
- b. 40 minutes play
- c. 15 minutes reflection

Step 1: Download and Print Materials

Print a set that includes:


- **Instruction Booklet**, print on **A3** (one per player, double sided)
- **City Tiles** – print on **A3** (one per group, double sided)
- **Rolecards** – print on **A4** (one per group, double sided)
- **Resources** – print on **A4** (one per group, single sided)
- **Daybreak cards** – print on **A4** (one per group, double sided)

Cut out the Daybreak Cards, Role Cards, City tiles, and Resources and fold the Instruction Booklets.

Step 2: Prepare the Table Setting

- a. On the table, put down a grid of 6 tiles in inactive mode (black side). Include one tile of each category (Teamwork, Community, Wisdom, Politics, Creativity, and Adaptability) - you can decide which ones.

¹ If you have good experiences or ideas on how this game could be further developed or expanded upon, feel free to reach out to denise.levyabeliuk@eur.nl.

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- b. Create a stack of each type of resource next to the grid (Teamwork Tokens, Community Crystals, Wisdom Whispers, Political Leverage, Creativity Blast, Adaptability Amulet)
 - c. Put the daybreak cards in order. If you want to increase complexity – you can put in extra ‘surprise events’ daybreak cards in the stack.
 - d. Make sure there is an instruction booklet for each player. Provide a pen for each player.
 - e. Shuffle the role cards.


Step 3: Provide Instructions

- a. **Welcome the participants:** When participants are seated, you read the “Welcome to Roffanova” text out loud (you can find it in the back of the instruction booklet). Ask if there are any questions before moving on.
- b. **Emphasize the objective of the game:** it's important to remind the participants about the goal and context of the game. You can say something like *“by playing the game, you will experience what it takes to make a positive impact in the city as a student taking an impact-driven course. This includes both exciting opportunities and difficult challenges. Throughout and after the game, you can reflect on your experience”*.
- c. **Emphasize the required attitude of participants:** to make the most out of this game, participants should be fully present. You can invite them to do so by saying something like *“I encourage you to play the game with a curious attitude and an open mind, withholding judgment. Step into the fantasy, embrace your mission, embody your role and, most importantly, have fun!”*
- d. **Distribute the role cards:** distribute the role cards randomly among the participants, indicating that these will be their roles during the game.
- e. **Step out and let them read the instructions:** from here on, participants take control – invite them to open the instructions booklet and let them decide if they want to read it together or individually.

Step 4: Your Role During the Game

- a. **Observe and take notes²:** pay attention to the group dynamics and how the game evolves. Pay special attention to how each participant is reacting to the complexity of the game and the role they are taking. You can even write down quotes that you find interesting or insightful. These notes will help you guide the reflection by using examples of what you observed.
- b. **Support when needed:** you will mainly let the participants play independently. Yet, you are available to respond to questions that might arise, especially about the rules of the game. Avoid giving advice about strategy or what’s the best way to go. Instead, ask questions that encourage them to figure out their own way.
- c. **Encourage reflection:** There are specific rounds in which you have a more active role:

² If you are playing with more than one group, distribute your time between the different groups.

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- Day 0 “Who is at the table?” (introduction of each role)
 - Day 5 “Assignment update!” (reflection about strategy)
 - Day 9 “Midway Reflection” (reflection about progress)
 - Day 15 “Final Day” (reflection about the city created)

Your role in this round is to help them go deeper by challenging their thinking. Ask questions like:

- Are your decisions aligned with your values as a group?
- Are your individual interests being represented?
- Are you satisfied with how the city is looking? Would you consider it a “resilient city”?
- What type of location is missing to achieve the city you envisioned? Which location is not really essential?
- From which perspective are you standing when designing this city? Have you considered alternative perspectives or target groups that might be hidden?

Step 5: After the Game: Group Reflection

After the game is over you should organize a moment of reflection. This is where the *learning* happens, as you connect the game experience with their reality. Depending on the objective you have, you can use your own reflection questions, but we have prepared a set of questions that you can fall back on:

General Questions About the Game Experience

Start by asking general questions regarding their experience playing the game:

- What was your experience playing this game? What feelings did you experience?
- How was it to enact your role? Is it similar to who you are? Why/Why not?
- What did you notice as the game proceeded? What caught your attention?

Questions to Make Connections with Impact-driven Education Experiences

Afterwards, make questions to help them associate their experience playing the game with their own real-life experiences with education:

- Do you recognize elements from this game in your own educational experience? (as follow-up questions you can suggest: the group dynamics, the relationship with an external stakeholder, the feedback from the teacher, the set-backs, etc.)
- How is a real-life impact-driven course different from what happened during the game?
- What do you think are the key elements that characterize an impact-driven course and make them different from a regular course? (as follow-up questions you can suggest some of the 5 principles for impact-driven education and see how they



resonate with the participants: authenticity, stakeholder involvement, interdisciplinary cooperation, perspective taking and navigating complexity)

After these connections are made, you can choose what you want to discuss, based on your target group.

Specific Questions for Teachers

1. Based on your experience playing the game, **what should students learn** during an impact-driven course? (you can explore knowledge, skills, attitudes and values)
2. What should be your **role as a teacher** in supporting the student journey during an impact-driven course? What might be specific points of attention, critical moments or challenges you can anticipate and how can you provide support?
 - a. Follow-up question: An impact-driven course proposes an open learning environment where students have plenty of autonomy and they work on a complex challenge. This means they have to **tolerate uncertainty and navigate complexity**. How can you support them in this process?
3. What is the role of **teamwork and collaboration** during an impact-driven course?
 - a. Follow-up question: What could be the role of **peer-feedback** in an impact-driven course?
4. What is the role of **external stakeholders** in an impact-driven course? How can they contribute to the learning process of the students?
 - a. Follow-up question: How can you promote an **ethical engagement** with external stakeholders that fosters a **sustainable and reciprocal collaboration**?
5. How can you facilitate that students create **tangible contributions** that can be valuable and useful for the external stakeholder?
 - a. Follow-up question: To what extent is it possible for a student to have a **positive impact in their city or community** during a course?
6. How would **meaningful assessment** look like in an impact-driven course?
 - a. Follow-up question: Do you have any positive experiences of meaningful assessment during an impact-driven course you can share?



Specific Questions for Students

1. Based on your experience during the game, what are some of your **personal strengths** and how can they contribute to this course?
2. What virtues did you notice in **your peers** that you would like to learn from?
 - a. Follow-up question: How did you experience the **diversity of roles during the game**? What do you think is the value of diversity within a group?
 - b. Follow-up question: How do you want to **collaborate with your classmates**? How can you create an environment in which you can learn from each other?
3. What do you expect to **learn** in this course? (invite them to think beyond knowledge and include skills, attitudes and values).
4. What do you think are the **advantages and possibilities of collaborating with an external stakeholder** during a course?
5. Based on your experience during the game, what kind of **challenges** do you foresee in the course? How can you anticipate these challenges?
6. What do you expect from your **teacher** in terms of guidance and support?
7. How does this game inspire you to **start working/keep working** on your own project during the course?

Specific Questions for Learning Innovators

1. What did you learn from stepping into the **students' shoes** during an impact-driven course? How can these insights enrich your work?
2. How did you see the **design principles of impact-driven education** reflected in the game? (authenticity, stakeholder involvement, interdisciplinary cooperation, perspective taking and navigating complexity)
 - a. Follow-up question: Which design principle of impact-driven education **resonated with you the most and why**?
 - b. Which element of an impact-driven course do you think is especially important to pay attention to when **co-designing a course with a teacher** and why?
3. How can you support a teacher who wants to take their **first steps into impact-driven education**?
4. How would **meaningful assessment** look like in an impact-driven course?
 - a. Follow-up question: Do you have any positive experiences of meaningful assessment during an impact-driven course you can share?
5. How do you find using a **game format to foster educational innovation**? When do you think it is useful? When could it be less effective?
6. How can you use this game **in your own practice**? How would you adapt it to fit the needs of the participants you mostly work with?