



PLAY FOR CHANGE

FACT SHEET 7

Reaching out to audiences through the implementation of digital outreach



TechLab
Le hub de l'innovation
technologique

**APF France
handicap**



PRESENTATION

"Play for Change" is an innovative initiative led by a collective of field actors from the Hauts-de-France region. Integration stakeholders, digital inclusion stakeholders, and associations specializing in people with disabilities have come together to develop a fun and engaging approach to attracting NEETS audiences.



The project was led by the **AFP France Handicap TechLab** (2022 to 2024), as part of the national "Digital Outreach" call for projects launched by the Caisse des Dépôts and Banque des Territoires.

Young people living with disabilities and those experiencing NEET expressed a need to meet professionals outside the healthcare and social care sector.

To help them regain their self-confidence and promote their professional integration, workshops combining skills development and video games were implemented by the project consortium.

PLAY 4 CHANGE

IN A FEW WORDS

- A project led by TechLab APF France Handicap in 2022.
- Reintegrating young people with disabilities into the professional world through the digital world and video games.
- Developing resources to extend the project's impact to other regions.

IN A FEW NUMBERS

- 2 years of experimentation
- 7 consortium members
- 1 associate partner
- 3 SMEs involved

**Combining physical and digital
outreach to reach isolated
audiences**

Video games are becoming increasingly popular in France year after year, and many experts have long considered them a recreational activity with sometimes harmful effects on health. However, in recent years, numerous practices have developed around gaming: e-sports, video game schools, practices in various organizations, and rehabilitation through gaming.

The challenge was therefore to shift the fun aspect of gaming to a practice that would allow the development of soft skills that could be used in a professional context. To achieve this, a methodology had to be developed to attract young NEETs, whether they have a disability or not, engage them, and then promote them to companies, training organizations, or support structures. Finally, the objective was to strengthen the confidence and empowerment of these young people by involving them as true stakeholders in a concrete project.

A first phase of testing was conducted with three IMEs, where young people with disabilities were supported for several weeks.



OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

Ensuring a presence on the communication tools that target audiences are familiar with and use daily is essential to reaching them. Thus, it was essential to capture the attention of young NEETs and retain their long-term engagement.

To achieve this, several social media platforms were created and maintained: Twitter (widely used by the target audience), Instagram, YouTube, Twitch, TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat, Discord, and WhatsApp.

The creation of a Play For Change server on Discord helped bring together young people identified at an event or on social media. To this end, private, thematic discussion channels were created to provide them with long-term support. Similarly, Twitch contributed to the development of gaming communities through live video broadcasts and the instant chat feature.

RAISING AWARENESS AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE CONTRIBUTION THAT VIDEO GAMES CAN HAVE IN THEIR FUTURE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

To reach the target audience, a partnership was established during the project with Vegacy: an association working closely with various social-professional integration partners in the area (local mission, employment center, community, associations, etc.).

This local esports organization, which has been operating in the area for several years, specializes in the gaming ecosystem. It organizes workshops aimed at developing specific skills transferable to the professional world (the ability to team up around a project, problem-solving skills, etc.).

To enable young people with disabilities to play and work, a dedicated space equipped with computers and consoles has been set up within the Maison Universelle in Villeneuve d'Ascq.

RESULTS AND IMPACT

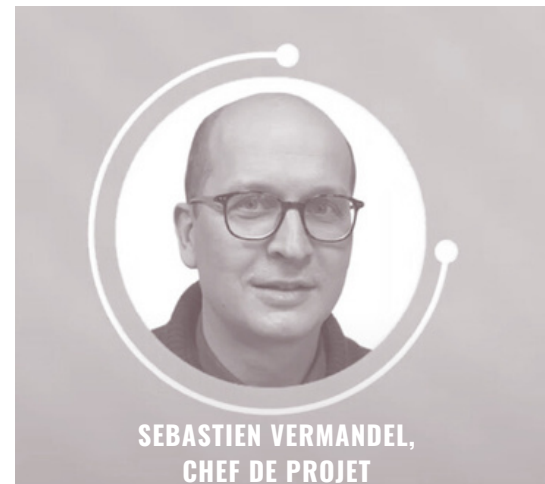
The initiative created a lasting bond between digital professionals and young NEETs. Connections were primarily established through the events Play For Change attended: a booth and gaming terminals were provided to engage young people via a fun interface. Also, organizing online tournaments and collaborating with well-known influencers in the world of video games proved to be one of the most successful communication strategies for reaching young NEETs.

Furthermore, the skills acquired through video gaming are recognized through an "Open Badges book." It follows the logic of the "skill trees" commonly found in video games: a series of skills to be unlocked throughout the game, depending on the paths chosen and the strategy adopted. This system helps build young people's confidence in their professional integration.

LESSONS LEARNED AND ADVICE

It is essential to adopt the platforms and communication tools used by young people to capture their attention and retain their engagement. Youth participation during events continues and is sustained over time through the exchange channels established on social media. Furthermore, promoting skills through a fun system of prior learning validation strengthens the motivation of young NEETs by offering them concrete recognition of their progress.

TESTIMONY



SEBASTIEN VERMANDEL,
CHEF DE PROJET

“Mobilizing NEET youth can be difficult in person. We had to reach this audience via social media, through existing esports events, or through events organized by members of the P4C consortium.

Once identified at an event or on social media, young people were systematically invited to join the Discord server set up to participate in online tournaments, receive information about upcoming skills-building workshops, and be offered individual support to advance personal or professional projects.

We also used the Twitch platform, featuring influencers who attracted their community around video game themes. To participate, participants had to complete a questionnaire about their professional situation.

This allowed us to reach NEETS audiences. This solution is powerful but comes at a cost due to the presence of sometimes expensive “influencer” speakers.”



<http://>



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<https://techlab-handicap.org/p4c>