

Blog Gaming Towards a Sustainable Future at Pathways to Sustainability Conference

During the second part of the Sustainability Education Day at the Pathways to Sustainability Conference, we played the Utrecht2040 challenge-based game. The session was called *Gaming Towards a Sustainable Future* and that is exactly what we did together with the participants! We created our own Sustainable Development Goal profiles by answering statements, we watched nano-lectures about varying topics, and we went outside in teams to think of solutions for related sustainability problems. Also, we got to know each other and enjoyed a nice time outside in sunny Utrecht!

The Utrecht2040 game was developed for students to learn about sustainability. The creation of the location-based, multiplayer, serious game was a response to the Strategic Plan of Utrecht University which states that *'Contributing to sustainability challenges is a top priority on its long-term agenda.'* The game stimulates students to think about the best possible version of Utrecht in 2040 together through gaming. By playing the game, they learn about the Sustainable Development Goals and experience tools to work with them in their daily lives.

The session led to the creation of many inspiring ideas for solutions to the challenges that were given. The challenges in this game session related to three specific topics: 1) The Inclusive City, 2) Eat like you say it, 3) Action for Climate Justice. Challenges included, for instance, "Solve it with coffee," "Inspire a stranger," or "Find creative ways to balance the interests of different groups of people or animals in the future." The participants shared their solutions to these challenges by uploading a picture with a short description into the Utrecht2040 app, and by tagging three relevant SDG's. They could view and like each other's solutions indicated by flags on the map of Utrecht. The three most liked solutions were rewarded with a golden flag! For all their activities in the game, the teams earned Quality of Life points.

After the prizes were awarded (congratulations, team SDGs Conquerors, UR2040, and Tiem&Nouk), there was space and time for reflection and feedback. In general, the participants established that playing Utrecht2040 mainly influenced their thoughts about the future and their willingness to change things in the future. Among their main takeaways were "games are needed" "look around you" "future-oriented" "learning with doing" "interactive" "change is possible" and "social learning." We also discussed that Utrecht2040 makes you look at the city from a different perspective, it leads to interaction with people you don't know, and playing the game encourages creativity.

To us, the Utrecht2040 game session was interactive and successful. We'd like to thank all the participants for their great contributions! Also, it provided a refreshing hands-on experience building on the fruitful brainstorm session about Graduate attributes for Sustainability in the morning. We hope to have inspired those who joined the session and would like to encourage everyone interested to have a look at: utrecht2040.sites.uu.nl.

The Utrecht2040 team

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