

The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of several interlocking puzzle pieces. Some pieces are white with cartoon drawings, including a person with a speech bubble that says 'THE PIL OF THE COMMUNITY!'. Other pieces are light blue. The puzzle is set against a textured, light brown surface.

**DIY<sup>2</sup> Lab – Summary Report**

# **Digital Escape Games in International Youth Work**

**ijAB**

January 2022

In March 2021, IJAB launched its new project DIY<sup>2</sup> Lab: Do-it-Yourself in Digital International Youth Work for experts, project managers and team leaders who want to explore the possibilities afforded by digital international youth work. The DIY<sup>2</sup> Labs are an opportunity for experts and team leaders to try out digital tools and methods and discuss practical as well as more fundamental issues associated with digital international youth work in the group. The events were all held on [Zoom](#).

The DIY<sup>2</sup> Lab event on 9 September 2021 was all about digital escape games in international youth work. The 14 participants split into teams of between two and four. Led by Zsolt Marton, communications manager at the Eurodesk youth information network in Brussels, they played Eurodesk's new digital escape game *Time to move: Adventures in Berlin*. Eurodesk had developed the game as part of a wider [pan-European campaign called "Time to Move"](#), which launched on 1 October 2021, the last day of Eurodesk's European network meeting. Eurodesk plans to develop further escape games set in various European cities.

The *Time to Move* game aims to encourage players to consider joining a learning mobility scheme that would take them to somewhere in Europe. The Berlin edition invites players to go on a trip through Berlin to find a missing grandmother. The teams have to work hard because they are only given clues if they perform everyday tasks, much as they would in a real-life placement: planting trees, making sandwiches, handing out drinks. The game is all about teamwork, because the players can only solve the clues if they work together. Two or more players have to split into teams, each of which share a screen. They need to share the clues with the other teams in order to complete the message and solve the problems in their entirety. The game can be played in 20 different languages. However, Zsolt Marton recommends playing the game in the same language because slight differences in the terminology may make it difficult to solve the problems.

A trailer for the escape game is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FaBszwwYbuc>.

The game itself is available here: <http://timetomove.eurodesk.eu/game>

## DIY<sup>2</sup> Lab

From January 2022, further DIY<sup>2</sup> Labs will take place monthly, one month in English, the next in German.

10 January 2022 (English)  
10 February 2022 (German)  
20 March 2022 (English)  
7 April 2022 (German)



# Digital Escape Games in International Youth Work

Escape games, an adventure game subgenre, have become very popular in recent years, both offline and online. But what added value do digital escape games offer for (international) youth work and how can they be used? This was the question to be answered during the DIY² Lab on 9 September 2021.

## What are escape games?

Escape games are part of a genre known as adventure games. The digital version of an escape game, of which Eurodesk's game is one, can usually be played using a browser. Players need to solve a problem which is set at the beginning of the game, which involves a background story. The original escape game was *Crimson Room*, which required players to solve clues and get out of a closed room as quickly as possible. This is no longer true of current escape games. In the case of Eurodesk's game *Time to Move*, players move past a number of digital stations/spaces, e.g., a train, a front garden, the reception area of a youth hostel, etc., as they are sent on a mission: to find granny Emma, who has gone missing.

In digital escape games, players can interact with their virtual environment by pointing and clicking on items. This way they can move, flip around or open items in the digital space. *Time to Move* allows players to move around the entire room, sometimes even taking in a 360 degree panorama. What is particularly important with this game is that teams can only solve the challenges together. For this to happen, they need to describe to each other what they can see or hear. Often, they need to move fast so they can solve the problem. If they fail, they fail together – but in that case they can repeat the round. They can also get help if they get stuck – a mysterious cat is in every scene to provide the teams with help if they need it.

Other important pieces of information about *Time to Move: Adventures in Berlin*:

- The game is asymmetrical, meaning there is no need for matchmaking.
- Once the game has loaded, the device can be taken offline.
- The game is GDPR-compliant. Players do not need to register.
- The game is hosted on the Eurodesk/TTM website.



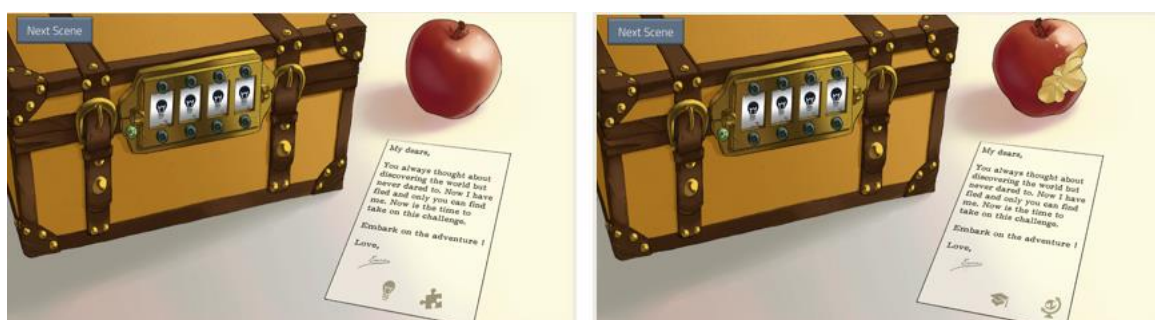
Source: Eurodesk

# Programme

## Introduction to *Time to Move*

To start off the DIY² Lab on 9 September 2021, Zsolt Marton from Eurodesk briefly explained the story behind the development of *Time to Move* and the principles of the game. These are:

- The teams can only solve the clues **together**. This requires them to communicate.
- It's best if the players all play the **same language version** of the game.
- Players will need **pens and paper**.
- They should resist the temptation to “cheat” by screensharing, etc.
- The Eurodesk game does **not** allow players to move back to a previous station.
- The game lasts between around 45 and 115 minutes.



Source: Eurodesk

## Playing *Time to Move*

After Zsolt's introduction, the players were randomly assigned to breakout sessions in groups of two to four. They received the link to the game and got started. Anytime they had questions or problems, they could return to the main room where Zsolt and the IJAB team were available to help out.

Once they had successfully completed the game, the players could return to the main room and discuss the experience.

After 90 minutes, all teams had returned to the main room and discussed the following:

- How did you experience the game overall?
- How can digital escape games be played in international groups (meaning what needs to be put in place, what needs to be considered)?
- Has anyone had any experience of escape games in this setting?

## Outcome, questions and ideas from the discussion

### Regarding the game itself

- The intro music is too loud. The games master may have to adjust the volume at the beginning of the game because it may be a challenge for some players (click right at the top of the browser tab, then click on “mute”).
- Everyone felt positive about the collaborative nature of the game. Players have to communicate frequently and explain to each other what they see and hear. That makes the game a great teambuilding activity.
- Given they need to communicate heavily during the game, the players from all over Europe get to know each other better. That said, the game offers little time or space to learn about the other players' cultures or to get more personal because of a strong focus on solving the problems. Maybe the developers could consider incorporating more intercultural elements in the game, which would allow players to discuss the intercultural issues specific to their own or the other countries, and/or to allow for more time to get to know each other properly.

- Generally, the game is not designed for players to learn more about Berlin's cultural highlights; this begs the question why the developers specifically chose Berlin as the setting.
- The game can also be used in an international exchange as a stepping stone towards discussing stereotypes, say, or diversity-related issues. Certainly there should be a couple of ice-breaker activities before the game so players can get to know each other a bit.
- Participants said it was unfortunate if individual teams have to hang back if, for instance, a challenge was correctly solved at a specific station, but one of the teams had not yet managed to enter the solution (in its entirety). Care should be taken to note down the solution on paper, because it is not possible to go back a step.
- A fast internet connection is important because otherwise some players may not be fast enough to move to the next stage while others (or the other team) overtake them.
- There is lots of potential here for language learning and having to negotiate the partner's language (indeed also for Language Animation). For instance, you have to find a word in the other language before you can move forward with the game. One possibility is to play the game in the partner's language, which is a great way to improve one's foreign language skills and learn in tandem.
- There is a cheat sheet for *Time to Move: Adventures in Berlin* that team leaders can use to provide support to their groups.

### On the matter of escape games in international youth work

- What is the difference between online and offline escape games when it comes to international youth work?
- The devices to be used for an escape game that is to be played during a youth exchange should be carefully chosen ahead of the game. Young people like to work with smartphones and tablets.
- An escape game can provide the players with the experience they need to then go and develop escape games of their own to play with their peers.
- Most participants said they would like to develop an escape game for their own target groups. One of the next DIY² Lab events could focus on how to do that.

## Digital Tools

Zoom (Videokonferenz-Tool): <https://zoom.us>

Escape game by Eurodesk (Time to Move: Adventures in Berlin) <http://timetomove.eurodesk.eu/game>

# Imprint

**Published by:****IJAB – International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany**

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January 2022

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der Bundesrepublik Deutschland e.V.