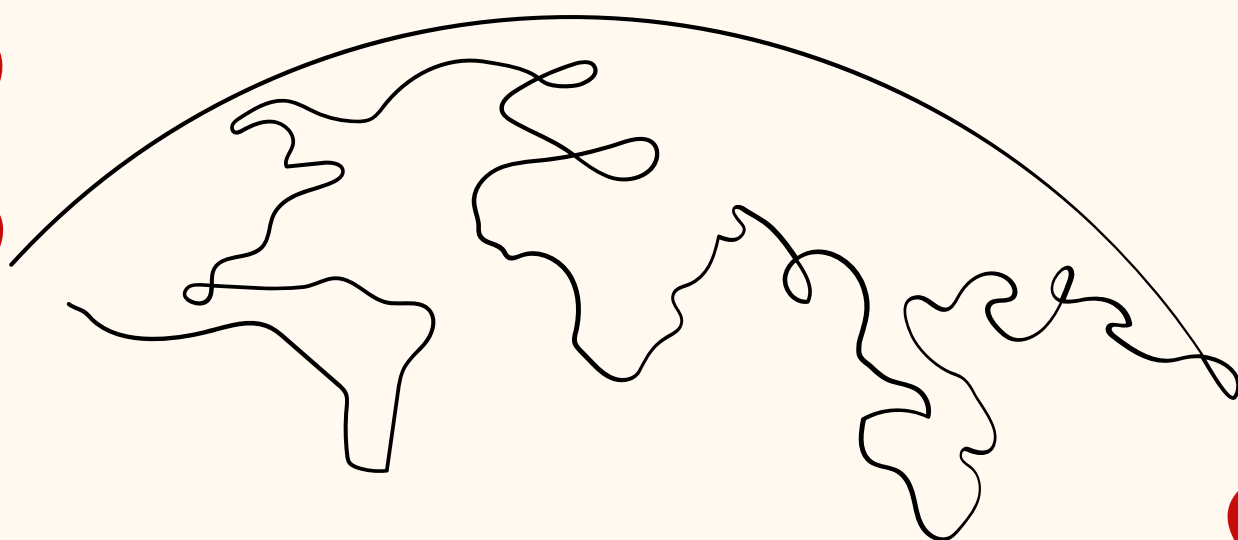


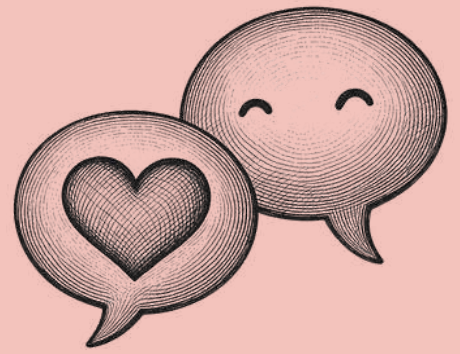
FACILITATOR'S GUIDE



29-05-2026

**CRISIS AVERTED
OR IS IT?**

ABOUT US



We are a group of students, Minna, Giorgia, Tera, Martina, and Luiza, interested in global governance, international crises, and how people make decisions under pressure.

Through the development of our game, we explored how gameplay can help players gain a better understanding of the complexity of international affairs by turning them into active actors with stakes in the outcome of the crisis.

Crisis Averted... Or is it? was developed as part of our Global Challenges course, allowing us to use game design and development to aid our own learning. The game combines negotiation, communication, ethical dilemmas, and role-play to stimulate the real life uncertainty and pressure involved in crisis governance.

GROUP PICTURE



GLOBAL CHALLENGE

Crisis Averted... Or is it? Addresses the global challenge of governance and decision making during international crises. More specifically, the game focuses on how states and actors respond when conflict escalates rapidly under conditions of uncertainty, limited information, competing interests, and time pressure.

The game explores how crises are rarely solved through simple “right” answers. Decision makers often face decisions where every available option carries trade offs, risks, and long term consequences. Players will learn to balance between a variety of priorities such as civilian protection, national security, environmental concerns, economic stability, and political legitimacy.

At the same time, the game will model the unequal power structure that exists behind these decisions. Some actors hold more political, military, or economic power than others, while some groups affected by the crisis have very little influence over the decisions being made.

We chose this issue because international crises increasingly shape the world new generations grow up in. From wars and invasions to environmental disasters, humanitarian emergencies, and geopolitical conflicts, young people constantly encounter global crises through news and, namely, social media. However, many only experience these issues passively and on a surface level basis.

OUR LOGO



GLOBAL CHALLENGE



We ultimately wanted to challenge simplified narratives that students may have about global conflicts. In reality, crises involve multiple perspectives, conflicting priorities, asymmetric information, and unequal power relationships. Our game attempts to make these tensions more visible.

This issue is important because governance failures during crises can lead to escalating matters such as state collapse, environmental destruction, loss of trust in institutions, and long-term instability. With the same reasoning, effective cooperation and decision making can reduce suffering and foster pathways toward peace and recovery. The game encourages students to think about the difference between the two by critically evaluating who holds power during crises, how decisions are justified, why cooperation is so difficult, how uncertainty influences governance, and what trade offs governments face.



METHODOLOGY



Our research process combined our previous knowledge with academic literature on governance, international relations, and crisis management, especially those developed in the earliest part of the academic year. This finalized governance in crisis as an issue that we all wanted to explore further and develop. We also included game design theory, existing political strategy and negotiation games, workshop feedback sessions, and group discussions with constant prototyping. We studied how existing games represent international politics and conflict in order to have a clear idea of how we would go about ours.

Initially, our project focused broadly on international crises and multiple global conflicts. However, after receiving feedback, we realized that our scope was too broad and difficult to represent in a clear way. We then shifted toward one fictional conflict instead of many real conflicts. We focused on a crisis management perspective with a cooperative but tension filled team structure. We also added a branching narrative system with escalating consequences for each choice. This allowed us to avoid oversimplifying real ongoing conflicts, include multiple perspectives more carefully, create a more playable and understandable experience, and really focus deeply on decision making processes.

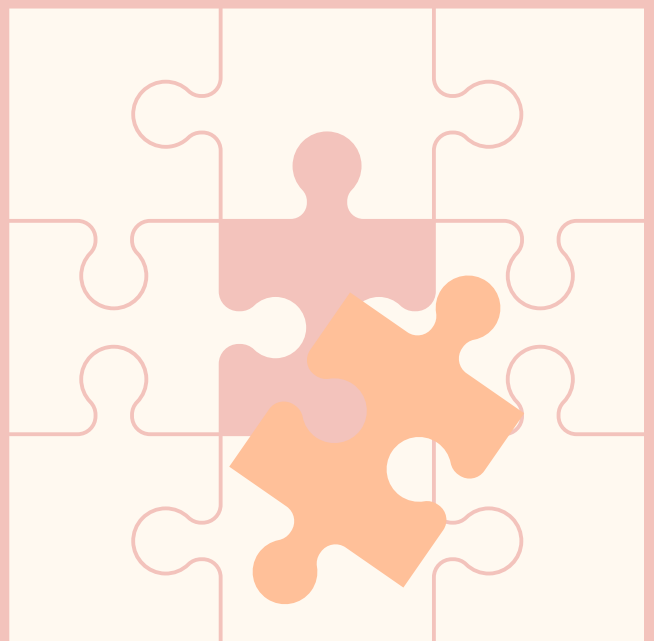
Our final concept centers around the fictional states of Glumendall and Umbravia. Although functional, the game is inspired by real world international dynamics involving resource conflicts, military escalation, environmental governance, humanitarian concerns, economic dependency, and international law. The functional setting gave us flexibility with the range of exploration of realistic issues without risking misjudgment and misunderstanding of real world crises.

DESIGN CHALLENGES

Designing a game proved to be a challenge from early on as none of us had never dealt with anything like this before. The first difficulty we faced was narrowing down the scope of our ideas, to ensure that they would reflect our global challenge while being realistically feasible for us to create. Through discussion and research we were able to overcome this difficulty early on and focus on creating our game with more specific dynamics. Once we decided our game would revolve around governance in times of acute crisis, we decided who our playable actors were going to be, influential figures in our fictional states. Representation in this case we realised can be considered limited, as the playable characters are only powerful executives. Therefore we decided to incorporate civilians and their viewpoint as the affected population, but not directly as playable actors.

Another challenge we faced in regards to design was deciding what kind of overall aesthetics to adapt to the game, which would make it consistent with its global challenge and theme.

Considering our game deals with serious and present day topics and dynamics, we decided early on in the project to adapt a minimal and simple design. We focused on only using images and colors which coincided with what we wanted to represent. This brought forward the issue of ensuring that the aesthetics of the game would remain minimal and linear in respect to the sensitive topics we deal with.



TARGET AUDIENCE

Our target audience is high school students aged 14-18. The game would be especially suitable for global politics classes, social studies, geography, or maybe some type of debate program. Students at our target age range are increasingly exposed to global crises through social media like TikTok, online discussion, and political polarization. However, many students have limited opportunities to actively engage with the complexity behind these issues. Thus, the game is designed to increase engagement with global affairs and encourage critical thinking. We hope that students will develop empathy and consider new preservatives. We also believe that discussion and negotiation skills will be improved. These skills are intended to be developed through the game with active rather than passive learning. The game is intentionally discussions based so students learn through interaction, disagreement, and collaboration.

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LEARNING GOALS

AFFECTIVE (ATTITUDES/EMOTIONS)

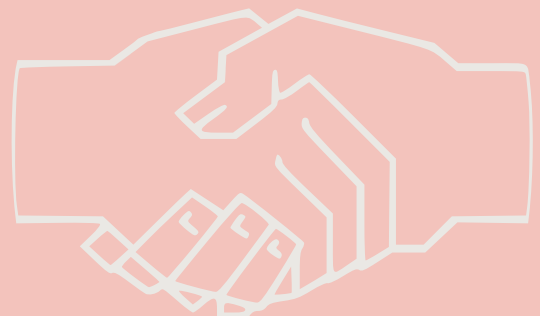
- Experience the stress and uncertainty of decision-making under pressure
- Reflect on ethical dilemmas where no option is ideal
- Value the importance of solidarity and cooperation during a crisis

COGNITIVE (KNOWLEDGE)

- Grasp how internal crises escalate
- Recognize the complexity of governance during emergencies
- Explore concepts from international relations such as cooperation and negotiation
- Learn how incomplete information affects decision making
- Realize how crises involve interconnected political, economic, environmental, and humanitarian dimensions

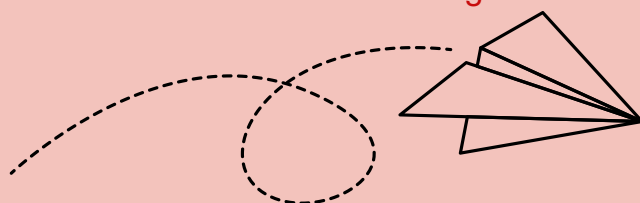
BEHAVIOURAL (ACTION/SKILLS)

- Develop negotiation and communication
- Engage with international affairs
- Collaborate under time constraints
- Debate and defend positions respectfully
- Make decisions with limited information



ADAPT TO THE CLASSROOM

Teachers need to prep students on topics of international news and how the political system works generally. In essence, students must have some background knowledge on how decisions are made in times of crisis during a class before the game is played, for instance, in a global perspectives course. The teacher should be familiar with the possible outcomes and have read the cards to give additional context when students ask questions that cannot be answered by the glossary. One class will be necessary to play the game. We recommend that the teachers make one class available to play the game instead of assigning it as homework, since students tend not to play games as assignments when there is no accountability. The teacher will need to divide the students into teams, give them time to set up the game by reading the rule book, picking the actor cards and going into gameplay. A recommendation is that students teams are made so that people who are always together are separated so that students focus on the serious game. Teachers are encouraged to walk around, listen in on the ongoing debates as a passive listener and, where needed, get students to continue playing the game. Students will require about 30 minutes total to play the whole game and end up at a final scenario. After the game is played, teachers can take some time to have students reflect on the game by asking questions regarding their experience and any questions they may have. It is expected that different groups will have taken a different path, so sharing that experience group to group could be valuable. To go deeper, the teacher can expand on how the UN's way of managing crises and the Dutch crisis team's inner workings. They will need a slide presentation with the necessary information to explain this. Also, they can facilitate an open discussion on how a real ongoing crisis is being managed and what makes it so difficult to do so. The ongoing crisis can be chosen at the teacher's own discretion. Practically speaking, if teachers want to use the game, it needs to be duplicated so that there are enough for all the students; we estimate about 5 games for one classroom.



ADAPT TO THE CLASSROOM

For bilingual HAVO and VWO, the game can be used as is, but for the regular stream, the game would need to be translated to Dutch. Potentially, some of the language needs to be simplified depending on the education level, and more terms need to be added to the glossary. In addition, we have a time constraint element in the game, which we have now used phone timers for, but since academic rules are generally against usage in the classroom, we recommend small hourglasses of 5 minutes to be incorporated. Also, the game could use a political scientist and crisis manager to look over the outcomes and see if this is a good enough representation of the real world, and potentially adapt some of the consequences in the branching structure. Finally, a teacher could expand on the created glossary if they are more knowledgeable about terms that would be unfamiliar to the high school students.

Facilitators should realise that the game is not encompassive in its consequences nor its representation of perspectives. They should emphasise that the game is in a fictional setting, but mirrors events that are occurring in the real world. Not all crisis teams have the structure or simplified procedure that we have created, and students should be made aware of the added complexities the real world poses, especially in the global South. Mostly, students will gain personal experience from making decisions under time constraints and limited information. The teacher can provide additional context on international affairs and crisis management.

Print & Play Materials

Slide deck with additional information for a lecture on crisis teams.

~ 5 playable versions of the game for a class of 30 people printed out

- The game includes a board with a pawn to keep track of the place in the game.
- Actor cards
- Crisis cards
- Rule book
- 1 facilitator guide per classroom



THANK YOU

HAVE FUN



PLAYING