



# Cross-Cultural Impact Jam



## Case Study: Global Collaboration through the Cross-Cultural Impact Jam

### OVERVIEW

**Games for Change** partnered with [Unity](#) and the [Cultural Services of the French Embassies](#) in the U.S. and Canada and the Consulate General of France in Quebec to host the **Cross-Cultural Impact Jam**, a week-long virtual event (March 20 - March 28, 2021). The Impact Jam brought together approximately 70 student developers from 20 different schools in Canada, France, Senegal, and the United States to explore how they can integrate diversity, inclusion, and impact into their emerging careers and collaborate in a creative challenge around the theme of inclusivity.

This jam was part of [Games for Good](#) and [Transitioning to Virtual Exchange](#), initiated by the French Embassy in the U.S., the FACE Foundation, and its partners, and part of Unity's [Social Impact Program](#).

### STRUCTURE

Prior to the Impact Jam, four students from each of the 20 universities were nominated by their faculty to participate in the virtual event. Students who accepted the nomination were placed in teams of 3-4 students from other countries. They were also invited to join a community Discord Server, where they were able to connect with their new colleagues, chat with their team, and utilize developer resources with technical support from the Unity team.

Unlike most jams which generally 'crunch' development throughout a weekend, the Cross-Cultural Impact Jam took place across one whole week. The extended schedule allowed for collaboration between teammates across global time zones and allowed students to balance their school and personal schedules.

### EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS

On the first weekend of the Impact Jam, students met their teams for the first time and participated in various activities, including a workshop describing parts of the DEEP Impact framework, a design methodology developed by G4C for impact games development. G4C also partnered with the IGDA Foundation who provided facts about diversity in the games industry in a bespoke workshop. During their session, the [IGDA Foundation](#)

offered practical tips for students who are entering emerging careers in the games and tech industries, focusing on themes of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

### GAME JAM: AMPLIFYING VOICES

After a weekend of activities, the theme was revealed, and students began to develop experiences around an inclusive theme: 'Amplifying Voices.' This theme was selected to encourage students to consider how they can uplift and advocate for meaningful social issues and marginalized voices in their communities. During the week, we also had gracious support from faculty mentors, who provided feedback to students throughout the program. All of the projects were created using Unity.

### GAME JAM OUTCOMES

At the end of the Impact Jam, teams presented their work to a panel of guest judges. The judges were:

- **Alain Wong**, [Unity](#)
- **Jehanne Rousseau**, [Spiders](#)
- **Kishonna Gray**, [University of Illinois - Chicago](#)
- **Krystal Theuvenin**, [School of Interactive Arts](#)

Together, students celebrated a week of cross-collaboration, and four student teams were honored with superlative awards. Three additional teams were also given honorable mentions.



## GRAND PRIZE WINNER



**Paving the Way** - See through the eyes of a visually impaired person by helping them navigate through town using tactile paving.

## MOST CREATIVE AWARD



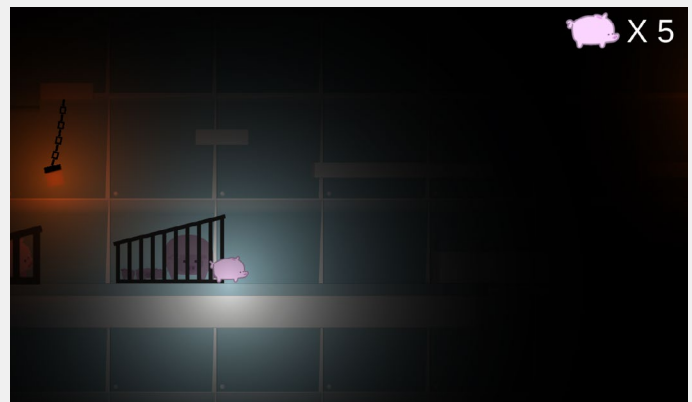
**Automated Days** - Play as a warehouse worker in an industry that only seeks to become more efficient, despite human well-being.

## MAKING AN IMPACT AWARD



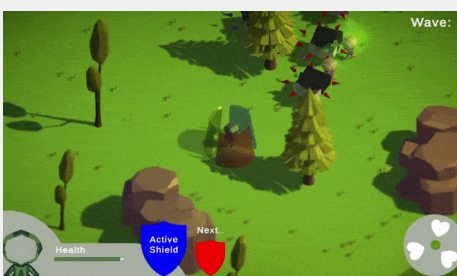
**Mask** - A game about masking, as well as the risks and rewards of revealing yourself to others.

## BEST VISUAL DESIGN



**Piggy** - In this horror-themed platformer game, you are a pig trying to escape a slaughterhouse.

## MOST CREATIVE AWARD



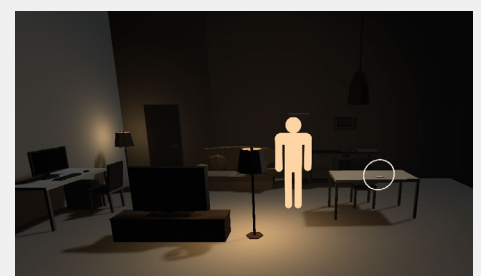
**Healing Heart** - Play as an astronaut whose ultimate mission is to humanize the aliens using love.

## MAKING AN IMPACT AWARD



**On the Flip Side** - When three peers are forced to confront their biases about each other.

## BEST VISUAL DESIGN



**A Night Without a Home** - Play as a homeless person as they navigate their first night away from home.

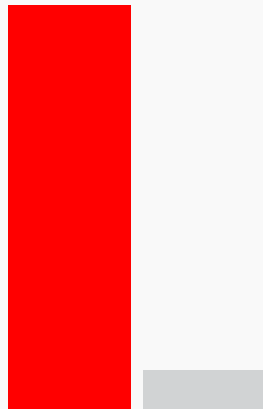
As of March 28th 2021, all game jam projects created are playable via the **Cross-Cultural Impact Jam Showcase** on the [Unity Play platform](#).

## FEEDBACK / SURVEY DATA

Feedback about the program was collected from qualitative surveys conducted after the Cross-Cultural Impact Jam. The survey results showed nearly universal positive responses to participation in the workshop and game jam. Please note that since many students are from different countries and speak different languages, some direct quotes have been localized to best support translation.

### Out of 44 student responses:

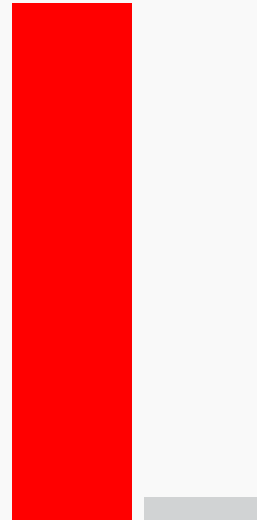
**91% of students found the educational content of the workshop relevant to them, their experience, and what they wanted to get out of the week.**



"I am a computer science student, so I have a background in programming, but I have never done game development. This jam allowed me to learn a lot of content-specific about the working process to make a video which I couldn't find on online tutorials..."

"The educational content was great, especially since I want to get to create a portfolio of games, but I don't have time due to my current schedule. The tips to create for future internships and employers were very helpful!"

**95.5% of students would recommend the Cross-Cultural Impact Jam to their peers.**



"This was my first game jam, and I had a lot of fun! I loved all of the different games that everyone made. There was so much variety in the themes and execution."

"This was so cool, I'm glad I got to meet such amazing people with amazing ideas, and I want to see what they become in the future!"

"I'm very happy that every group could deliver a game made through a week on an international scale!"

"I'm glad to have built a strong relationship between people with different cultures and time zones. There are a lot of issues in the world, but there is hope."

## CONCLUSION

After the Cross-Cultural Impact Jam's success, students have continued to stay connected and support each other via the Discord Server. Students from the four winning teams were invited to meet with expert professionals at Unity Technologies. One of the biggest highlights from the program was exploring the importance of diversity in the industry. Student teams greatly appreciated the global collaboration and the opportunity to meet other students from different cultures. Games for Change is proud to have fostered these friendships and connections globally. Moving forward, Games for Change is well-positioned to create cross-cultural workshops and game jams in both virtual and in-person formats.