

## 1. Introduction

On the 25th of June 2025, the YMCA Headquarters in Freetown hosted a transformative gamification workshop involving young people from Liberia and Sierra Leone. The training aimed to build the capacity of youth to design and develop games that promote social change, with a particular focus on environmental issues. The workshop provided a platform for critical thinking, creativity, and cross-border collaboration, ultimately leading to the development of innovative game concepts.

## 2. Workshop Overview

- a) **Theme:** Gamification for Environmental Action
- b) **Venue:** YMCA Headquarters, Freetown
- c) **Date:** 25th June 2025
- d) **Participants:** 14 young people (10 male, 4 female)
- e) **Countries Represented:** Liberia and Sierra Leone

## 3. Objectives

The key objectives of the workshop were:

- a) To introduce participants to gamification and its potential as a tool for social impact.
- b) To facilitate the co-creation of game prototypes focused on community and environmental issues.
- c) To promote youth-led innovation and collaboration across borders.

## 4. Training Process and Activities

Participants underwent a series of interactive sessions, including:

- a. **Introduction to Gamification Concepts:** Participants explored how games can be designed to inspire learning and behavior change.
- b. **Group Ideation & Design Thinking:** Teams identified key environmental challenges and worked together to brainstorm game concepts.
- c. **Prototype Development:** Two game ideas were developed into early-stage prototypes.
- d. **Feedback and Peer Review:** Each team presented their game and received constructive feedback.

## 5. Highlighted Outcome: The "Waste Hunt" Game

Among the two games created, **Waste Hunt** emerged as the most promising with significant potential for impact and scale-up.

### Concept Summary:

The *Waste Hunt* game seeks to encourage environmental responsibility, particularly in the area of waste management. It aims to raise awareness and educate young people and communities about how to identify, differentiate, and properly manage waste.

- a. **Game Format:** A board-and-card game
- b. **Cards:** Feature icons and images of different waste types, along with instructions, facts, and action prompts
- c. **Board Mechanics:** Players move across a thematic game board based on card instructions, learning to sort waste and apply appropriate treatments
- d. **Learning Goals:** Teach the categorization of waste (biodegradable, recyclable, hazardous), promote responsible disposal behaviors, and stimulate environmental action

Due to its educational design, visual appeal, and adaptability, *Waste Hunt* has potential for integration into schools, youth clubs, and community learning initiatives.

## 6. Participant Feedback

Participant feedback reflected both enthusiasm and appreciation for the workshop process and outcomes:

- a. **Engaging & Fun:** Participants described the training as interactive and enjoyable.
- b. **Educational Impact:** The workshop provided new perspectives on problem-solving and environmental advocacy.
- c. **Critical Thinking:** The game development process encouraged analytical skills and teamwork.
- d. **Relevance:** Youth saw the games, especially *Waste Hunt*, as highly relevant for addressing real-world challenges in their communities.

## 7. Key Outcomes

- I. **Capacity Strengthening:** 14 young participants trained in game design for social change

- II. **Prototypes Developed:** Two game prototypes were co-created, including *Waste Hunt*
- III. **Scalability Identified:** *Waste Hunt* selected as a game with scale-up potential
- IV. **Cross-Country Youth Collaboration:** Strengthened relationships between Liberian and Sierra Leonean youth
- V. **Knowledge Transfer:** Participants gained practical skills in creative ideation, teamwork, and communication

## 8. Recommendations and Next Steps

To sustain the momentum generated from the workshop, the following steps are recommended:

1. **Further Development of Waste Hunt:** Allocate resources to refine the game design, artwork, and instructions.
2. **Pilot Testing:** Implement pilot sessions in selected schools and community centers to evaluate usability and learning impact.
3. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Collaborate with environmental NGOs, education authorities, and youth networks for game dissemination.
4. **Follow-up Workshops:** Offer additional sessions to enhance youth skills and promote peer-led training.
5. **Monitoring & Evaluation:** Design a framework to assess the educational and behavioral outcomes of the game once implemented.

## 9. Conclusion

The gamification workshop at YMCA Headquarters was a successful and inspiring event, equipping youth from Liberia and Sierra Leone with innovative tools for environmental action. The development of *Waste Hunt* signals a promising path forward for using creative, youth-led approaches to address pressing issues like waste management. With the right support and partnerships, *Waste Hunt* could become a powerful educational resource for communities across the region.