

BEHAVIOURAL GAMES IN RIGA

Workshop ran by
the University of
Reading

An article by F. Dubois
and S. Šūmane



On the 2nd and 3rd of November 2022, the University of Reading ran a **behavioural games workshop** in Riga in collaboration with IN-HABIT's Riga partners (BSC, Riga Planning Region, and Kalnciema Quarter).

Behavioural games are **simulations of real-world environments in which scenarios and incentives can be manipulated and choices can be observed**. As a project that aims to foster inclusive health and well-being in four small to medium-sized cities by involving a large number of residents in the adoption of innovative solutions, these games are an essential part of the IN-HABIT methodology and will be used at multiple stages of the project. In the early stages, behavioural games will be used **to support the establishment of inclusive rules and institutions and to understand what frictions can limit cooperation among the residents**, hence threatening inclusion. In the latter stages of the project, these games will help **to support and maintain change among the communities**. Based on understanding a “day in the life” of local inhabitants, **behavioural games will test solutions for promoting the adoption of sustainable lifestyles**.



The aim of the **workshop in Riga** was to run the behavioural games developed by the University of Reading as smoothly as possible in order **to collect good data to inform** the IN-HABIT partners **about any resistance to cooperation** with the IN-HABIT solutions. In particular, the games focused on the implementation of a community stage in the vicinity of the Agenskalns market. The proposal from the Riga partners is that this stage could be used for events promoting the integration of sexual minorities. Whilst Europe is making great strides in this area, it is still a very sensitive subject. As such, the behavioural games were used to give insights as to the potential resistance that could be faced from the Riga residents on the proposed use of the community stage.

After several month's hard work developing the behavioural games, the workshop was a great opportunity to finally implement them, and the sessions ran in Riga went very well. **The Riga partners were extremely dedicated to the event and worked closely together to prepare and implement the sessions**, their energy and enthusiasm leading to the success of the games and the participants' overall satisfaction. A number of **participants noted that the activities inspired them to reflect more deeply on their neighbourhood and made them realise the availability of numerous services in proximity to them**, while others **wished to know more about the method**. There was also a lot of curiosity about how the results of the games would be used to improve the Agenskalns neighbourhood, providing a good indication of the attendees' interest and willingness to invest in their community.

Despite some challenges faced, the IN-HABIT partners worked together to overcome any difficulties to deliver a highly successful workshop and collect some valuable data that will be used to help address any potential issues that could arise in Riga.



AUTHORS

Florent Dubois:

Postdoctoral researcher, Department of Economics, School of Politics, Economics and International Relations, University of Reading.
Associated researcher, EconomiX, University of Paris Nanterre.

Sandra Šūmane:

Senior researcher, Baltic Studies Centre