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Vision

By creating a new generation of children with higher emotional intelligence we wish to create a world without bullying, hatred and exclusion.”

Rosie:

It all started for almost 4 years ago with me dreaming about creating a game that would encourage emotional development and help prevent bullying. With two daughters growing up in the digital era, I realized that the game must have high quality, be entertaining and fun beside being educational. Although the original idea came to me in 2011, things didn't really take off until 2013 when i teamed up with Talawa Games. It was a young gaming studio, led by Jesper Engström and a perfect match when it comes to our values. Together we delivered a working demo to Almi in May 2013, that finally gave us the Innovation loan and we could start the production.

Jesper (Co-founder):

I started a gaming studio because I wanted to show the world that games can be so much more than the perception of it. Games has everything a good movie, book, piece of music and art has plus the extra ingredient of interaction. With this powerful tool we can teach and touch hearts in a way never before because interaction requires something from the viewer, the power of involvement.

We also wanted to show the all to fast growing, stereotypical and childish industry how to work professionally, ethically and creatively in a company without burning out the employees. I met Rosie and the rest is history!

High lights 2014 and Achievements:

- Winning Reach For Change. This was highly awaited for me since I applied 3 times before I finally became a change leader. The best decision was to apply together with Jesper who complete me as a partner with his knowledge from the gaming industry.
- Standing on stage and telling our story in front of 3000 people at Stockholm Tech Fest. The love and support we got from the audience was totally overwhelming.
- Featured worldwide by Amazon and Sony Mobile.
- Named one of the top 3 “Hottest start-ups 2014” in Sweden by Internet World.
- Nominated to "Newcomer of the year 2014" category mobile games by Mobile Business.
- Winner of Reach For Change "Sweden's toughest competition for social entrepreneurs".
Winner of the people's choice award "Entrepreneur of the future" Svenska Dagbladet.



The most global success was that we got a huge company like Amazon to believe in our innovation and good kids games that they actually used us as a pilot to try and see if a niche category as kids games could make a good impression on their very broad promotion globally. After the promo Amazon saw that the feedback was so great that they now are considering to provide other meaningful kids games there as well. To be part of the revolution for good and meaningful kids games makes me very proud.

Peppy Pals Reviews



Peppy Pals "may be one of the most innovative Swedish games in years."

"Smart, well-designed, and one of a kind"

- Smatoos.

"Inspires discussions about feelings and empathy"

- PappasAppar, Europe's #1 children's app reviewer.

"It actually works!"

- Gomorron Sverige, Swedish national television morning show.

"Great storytelling app that helps juniors develop emotional intelligence"

- GeeksWithJuniors.

"My son will work through scenario, after scenario, after scenario..."

- Geekmummy's App Talk.

"One of the most innovative games in years"

- Thomas Annroth, renowned Swedish games journalist.

Numbers

- Total amount of Down Loads from April to December: 55 800

- Ranked among the top ten children's games in the iOS App Store for Sweden and 16 other countries for several months.

- Statistics show tha 50% of children play all scenarios at least once during their first play session, and after three months 20% are still playing twice or more per day.



Impact 2014

Some examples of feedback that we have received from Parents in Sweden and globally.

iOS customers:



“Det var underbart att få veta hur hon kände”

“När min dotter fyllde två år lanserades appen Peppy Pals. Jag hade länge velat hitta ett spel som inte bara är underhållande men också utvecklande på samma gång. Vi satte oss ner tillsammans med iPaden och jag lät henne på egen hand utforska spelet. Ganska snabbt hade hon hittat till den delen där man tyder djurens ansiktsuttryck, hennes favorit. För varje känsla som uttrycktes på skärmen så förklarade jag noga innebörden, och vi speglade tillsammans känslan på ett lekfullt sätt med egna ansiktsuttryck.

Kort därefter började hon själv uttrycka sina känslor. När hon inte fick som hon ville kunde hon säga “Jag är arg!”, samtidigt som hon tydligt visade känslan med sitt kroppsspråk. I det läget kunde jag lugnt förklara att det är okej att bli arg ibland, och att det snabbt brukar gå över. Hon kunde också spontant säga “Jag är glad!” under dagen. Det var underbart att få veta hur hon kände, och uttrycken kom verkligen plötsligt. Peppy Pals visade sig vara ett underhållande spel men också ett värdefullt verktyg för att lära sig mer om känslor.”

Reach for Change stöttar sociala entreprenörer med idéer som gör livet bättre för barn. En av dem är ROSIE LINDER & JESPER ENGSTRÖM, grundare av PEPPY PALS. Peppy Pals är ett mobilt EQ-spel som lär barn om vänskap, känslor och empati för att motverka att de ska mobba andra eller själva bli mobbade.



‘Peppy Pals was launched when my daughter turned 2 y/o. I was longing to play a game with her that entertained and helped develop her emotional skills. The value that Peppy Pals has shown us has meant that it has become a regular part of our day. One of my daughter’s favourite scenes is ‘guess the expression’, which has taught my daughter to express and understand her feelings much better. My daughter loves to play with Peppy Pals, and it is great knowing that she is learning at the same time.’ Joseph Michael

‘A great way for kids and parents to learn by playing together and understand that games does not need to be fast and stressful, boy-ish shooters or crappy girl-ish pink princess stuff. A paradigm shift in the gaming world for kids!’

‘For very long time, I have been looking for this kind of games that can help me teach my children empathy and friendship. Finally I have found one! The game is incredibly nice and it is a big plus that there are no competitive elements in the game’

‘Social skills gaming at its best. Wow factor!’



Amazon customers:

‘My four year old has been using this app for a while and keeps coming back to it. She's almost five now. I read the reviews and initially went through the scenarios and we talked about the feelings and emotions involved. She is more attentive and comments on how the animals are getting along and or helping each other. It's entertaining for her and help her to thing about other peoples emotions as well so I think it's a good thing.’

‘I know very little about it but of all the games on my phone this one keeps my 3yr old daughter coming back and she seems to really enjoy it. She can actually do the tasks and gets a kick out of the creatures and their emotional responses.’

‘I have five daughters, the oldest is 7 and the youngest is 1. This works for all of them and they enjoy the cute and quirky animation. Three of my five children have special needs. The oldest has Aspergers, FAS, and ADD/ADHD. The second to youngest has Autism Spectrum, OCD, and minor schizophrenia. The youngest of mine has FAS, Mood Disorder, and Developmental Delay. This game touches to all of them , whether they feel bad for a character or happy for them, it has helped my children learn about feelings. I also noticed this had a great decrease in conflict, and they argue much less. This game is a well made game that will help your children learn about their feelings.’

‘Hours of entertainment for a 2 year old. I recently sat my 2 year old son down with his 4 year old cousin and they played with this for at least an hour. It's the first time I have seen them sit still and play together without fighting!’

‘It took a couple times to understand it myself, but since then it has been a wonderful tool to help label emotions. Once able to label emotions, kids can better understand what they are feeling and deal with it in a more rational way. It is no magic wand, but a powerful aid none the less.’

‘Awesome Autism App, I have been looking for this type of app for a long time. My girls love it!’

‘This is an excellent app for children. I am short of words to describe the beauty of it. No words are used in this app. But still it manages to communicate a message of million words. Your child will love this. No doubt. And you will love this for the valuable education it offers to your kids.’

‘This game is amazing. I have a 4 year old and a 6 year old. It's perfect for parents who don't really like "gaming". It's teaching children about emotions and being kind. I am so happy about this game studio and I hope they keep making games like this. I hope they can put this kind of thing into games for older kids too. Games about friendship and being friendly.’

The problem we are solving:

A study conducted in the USA (2010, 14 000 participants) showed that students were 40% less empathetic compared with college students 30 years ago. Bullying, as well as cyber-bullying, are both growing problems today. A study in Britain found that more than half of suicides among young people are related to bullying. (Ref: <http://www.bullyingstatistics.org>)

Emotional Intelligence (EI or EQ) is about identifying, expressing, and controlling our emotions. Research suggests that higher emotional intelligence reduces the chance of being bullied or bullying others, among other benefits. Emotional Intelligence is working its way into schools worldwide, spearheaded by proven programs such as RULER and CASEL. The good news is that EQ can be learned. Unlike an IQ, one can enhance emotional intelligence by developing certain skills and practice. Daniel Goleman, PhD. says that schools should teach it systematically and found out that schools that teach emotional intelligence tend to report an increase in academic success, better teacher-student relationships, and a decrease in problem behavior, including bullying.

Some of our volunteers 2014:

We have been fortunate to be contacted by many volunteers who find Peppy Pals interesting and want to work with us.

-Bodil Wennberg who is the “mother of EQ” in Sweden. She is Psychologist and author of many books on EQ

-Kelly Brofall who has helped us a lot with the lay out of Peppy Pals books among other things such as analyzing statistics.

- Katherine Capedevila who has helped us with the new home page.

Our Product:

Peppy Pals is characterized around a group of animal friends that the players can interact with and help out in various situations with social skills like emotions, empathy, and friendship. The game adds a lots of humor and surprise to make it interesting for the children. The animal characters are created with different personalities to ensure that children can connect identify themselves with the characters.



Please check out these videos to learn more:

- [Game Trailer \(1 min video\)](#)
- [2 scenarios \(3-min video\)](#)

The game is suitable for children ages 2-6, and consists of an interface free of any text or language, making it suitable for children around the globe. The interface focuses instead on expressive characters, detailed animations, and beautiful hand-painted backgrounds. It blends 'point-and-click' adventures and mini-games with emotional intelligence, and has been developed in collaboration with experts as well as a leading children's psychologist. No parental supervision is required to play.

Peppy Pals was born global. Emotions are universal and that makes the spread easier. We do know that we have a high quality product however it is not anymore a guarantee for cut through the noise among so many apps out there.

Unlike other games, Peppy Pals encourage children to socialize. Mobile games are here to stay in the same way that television works, it is a parental responsibility to set limits and make educational but fun games available. By limiting screen time and offering educational media, parents can help guide their children. There are many of studies that show video games make people smarter.

Target group

Children 2-6 • Parents • Educators/Preschools • Publishers • Municipalities

Platform and Pricing:

Peppy Pals is available on iOS, Android and Amazon for both phones and tablets, for € 2.4. There are no in-app purchases or links to other products that children might accidentally buy.

Business Model:

The Peppy Pals business model is meant to serve as an interactive book with several chapters in which we will release one chapter at a time. The game Peppy Pals isn't exclusively a game or a storybook, but contains elements of both.

Peppy Pals Empathy Adventures was the first in the Peppy Pals series. The plan is to release two to three games per year. More products also provide greater spread through so-called cross-promotion. The next product, "Peppy Pals Beach" will be released in February 2014.

Research - Professor Annika Waern

Peppy Pals was studied in a master thesis project at the department of Informatics and Media at Uppsala University here in Sweden. The study was conducted with 40 children in the spring of 2014 by Gunnar Bohné and was supervised by professor Annika Waern as part of a master thesis.

We were happy to see their findings as it suggests that Peppy Pals has EQ value while also giving us ideas on how to improve our games. We've been in touch with Gunnar and Annika for over a year so their observations helped guide the development of the soon released

'Peppy Pals Beach'. What's perhaps most fun about their findings is that children seem to clearly understand our narratives and emotional content, while even exhibiting both emotional and bodily involvement while playing.

"It was particularly interesting to notice the children's bodily engagement with the story", says Gunnar Bohné. "Very often, they would use their own bodies to mimic the animals, such as breathe in synchronization to gather courage, or talk directly to the animals. Often, they would laugh."

They also noted that Peppy Pals inspires discussion about emotions between children and parents/teachers. The research findings, together with feedback from other sources, are well in line with the improvements to our second game, and so we are more confident in both the entertainment and EQ value of the second Peppy Pals game.

The published master thesis "Emotions at play: Gaining emotional knowledge using a video game" is accessible here

<http://www.divaportal.org/smash/get/diva2:747683/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

The Team



Peppy Pals' team is made up of several Co-Founder's, and was built on mutual trust and admiration for each member of the team.

The development team, Talawa Games' recent game, '*Unmechanical*' was featured on iOS Appstore with first page banner all over the world in May 2013 and has won several international awards: Best Game and Best Sound at BIG (Brazil International Game Festival) and Best Artistic Achievement at NGA (Nordic Game Awards).

Maral Kalajian is also a cofounder and she is responsible for social media and digital marketing.

What's ahead 2015

In February we will release our second game "Peppy Pals Beach" that relies on similar gameplay and game structure as its predecessor. This time around the animal friends are playing and socializing in a sunny and colorful beach environment. They're bathing in the ocean, building sandcastles and throwing water balloons, among other exciting activities.

The four pals from the first game are joined by their friend Kelly, a cat who's kind at heart but might be a bit stuck up at times. Their casual holiday fun is sometimes interrupted or side-tracked by accidents or misunderstandings, but through empathy and collaboration their friendship only grows stronger.

We will also take the first step towards merchandise by signing a contract with one of the biggest publishers in Sweden, Natur & Kultur for making books and e-books on the concept of the game. The books will be a combination of study material and fun adventure and will be released in February 2015. Many traditional VCs ask us "why are you making books, you'll not earning so much money by books". The answer is that we make books because we want to involve teachers and parents in learning EQ and by using both digital and physical EQ products we aim to involve multiple senses for deeper EQ learning.

Professor Annika Waern will initiate a new study with pre-school and families. She will focus the study on body language while kids are playing and how the apps and books can inspire to dialogue between kids and parents/teachers.

"In an early study of Peppy Pals, we saw how children would engage physically and emotionally with the game content. I believe that the game explores opportunities for learning that mostly are overlooked in computer game design." Annika Waern, Professor in Human - Computer Interaction

Independent review

Introduction

What started out as a dream back in 2011, became reality during 2014. With Peppy Pals, the founders together with the gaming studio Talawa Games, has taken their first steps towards their ambitious vision to create a new generation of children with higher emotional intelligence and a world without bullying, hatred and exclusion. The people behind Peppy Pals seems to be genuinely passionate, engaged and committed to make a change and to have a global impact, in a business that puts the cause first and the revenues second, in the true spirit of social entrepreneurship.

As emotional intelligence, firstly introduced to the wider public through Daniel Goleman's book (Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ) in 1995, has become more and more acknowledge and even introduced in schools curriculum, the timing for an interactive game targeting emotional intelligence in children feels just right.

Target group

The target group is of course children, and more specifically children between 2-6 years of age, as well as parents, educators, publishers and municipalities. The report is filled with customer reviews from parents praising the game as they've seen their children interact with the animated animals starring in the game. Having tried the game myself, I must say that it comes across as highly engaging, even though I'm not part of the target group myself.

Impact & research

The majority of the impact variable comes from user feedback and reviews as previously stated. Although these testimonials are very powerful, especially from parents with children in the autism spectrum, it would be interesting to see them paired with quantitative ratings which may become available when number of downloads increases.

The current and ongoing research project at the department of Informatics and Media at Uppsala University seems very promising with findings suggesting that children expresses an understanding of the emotional contents and becomes both emotionally and bodily involved. Add to that the possible spill-over effects of encouraging discussions about emotions among children and between children and parents/teachers.

Talking about research, the report highlights a study from 2010, showing that students are 40 % less empathetic today when compared to students 30 years ago, and another study revealing that more than half of suicides among young people are related to bullying. These are of course topics that should be of great concern to the global community, highlighting the need for educational tools and resources that are up to date and in-line with the current media landscape. The report is also referring to research suggesting that higher emotional intelligence reduces risk of being bullied or bullying others, although this research isn't cited. This appears to be one of the key links between the scientific foundation and Peppy Pals vision; to combat bullying, hatred and exclusion through the development of emotional intelligence.

Future considerations

Peppy Pals are embarking on their mission to spread the word globally, to important markets such as Asia and the US. With a new version of the game just out and several more to come, chances are good that they'll reach the critical mass where parents or teachers, who are looking for educational aides for their children and pupils, turn to Peppy Pals as a natural choice. In order to realize their vision, more research on the true impact of games like Peppy Pals on children's emotional intelligence, followed by the positive consequences of

developing it, would be a valuable if not necessary asset. Another challenge for Peppy Pals and/or other game developers could be to create equally interactive and engaging games for older children and pre-teens, to keep the momentum going. Peppy Pals has certainly taken the first important steps, showing that it's possible to make education both entertaining, engaging and fun.

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