ANTILIMBO GAME RECOMMENDATIONS

Key insights from national survey results relevant for game design

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LATVIA – Main Game Design Conclusion

Ukrainian youth in Latvia live in a clear *"in-between"* state: socially active and moderately integrated, yet emotionally rooted in Ukraine. The game should therefore focus on **narrative depth, emotional validation, and shared experiences**, rather than instruction or correction.

Core recommendations:

1. **Story-Driven & Adventure-Based Design**
   Build the game around a strong narrative with meaningful choices, emotional arcs, and real-life dilemmas that reflect identity, uncertainty, and transition between cultures.

2. **Social Interaction as a Core Mechanic**
   Include cooperative missions, group challenges, and shared storylines that promote collaboration, communication, and peer connection.

3. **Emotional Safety & Mental Well-Being**
   Integrate gentle emotional check-ins, reflective moments, and hopeful messaging. The game should normalize uncertainty and provide reassurance rather than pressure.

4. **Hybrid Identity & Cultural Pride**
   Reflect Ukrainian culture (music, traditions, history, values) alongside Latvian everyday life. Encourage comparison and coexistence rather than assimilation.

5. **Music, Travel & Exploration Mechanics**
   Use sound, rhythm, journeys, map exploration, and discovery-based quests as core gameplay elements aligned with youths' interests.

6. **Belonging over "Fixing"**
   The game should validate lived experiences and reinforce that players are not alone, rather than positioning itself as a tool to "correct" or train behavior.

🇸🇪 SWEDEN – Main Game Design Conclusion

Ukrainian youth in Sweden show high creativity, resilience, and openness to learning, while still facing social and linguistic barriers to deeper integration. The game should act as a **safe creative space** that supports expression, exploration, and gradual connection.

Core recommendations:

1. **Creativity at the Center**
   Integrate art, drawing, music-making, and other creative tools as active gameplay elements, not just decoration.

2. **Communication & Social Interaction**
   Design opportunities for peer interaction, dialogue, and cooperation, encouraging connection without forcing social exposure.

3. **Learning Through Play**
   Embed learning about European culture, identity, and hosting/partner countries naturally into gameplay, alongside reflection on personal identity.

4. **Narrative & Player Agency**
   Emphasize interesting characters, freedom of choice, exploration, and player-driven progression.

5. **Emotionally Engaging Formats**
   Favor adventure/story-based, simulation, casual, and puzzle/logic game types that support reflection rather than competition.

6. **Experience over Performance**
   Prioritize emotional resonance and meaning over technical complexity or rigid success metrics.

🇧🇪 BELGIUM – Main Game Design Conclusion

Ukrainian teens in Belgium emphasize **story, hidden meaning, and emotional reassurance**, while navigating feelings of social inexperience, comparison, and uncertainty in a highly developed environment. The game should provide **recognition, calm, and relational clarity**.

Core recommendations:

1. **Layered Storytelling with Hidden Meaning**
   Design multifaceted narratives that explore topics not often discussed openly (identity, insecurity, belonging, difference).

2. **Strong Visual Identity**
   Invest in appealing graphics and visual storytelling to support immersion and emotional engagement.

3. **Representation of Personal Differences**
   Include character profiles (e.g. shy, modest, confident) to normalize diversity in

personality and social behavior, helping players understand each other.

4. **Reassurance Through Real-Life Scenarios**
   Use realistic situations and examples that calm players and reinforce the idea that their future exists and is achievable.

5. **Multiplayer & Shared World**
   Enable players to exist in one shared environment where they can communicate, cooperate, and feel presence without pressure.

6. **Building & Personal Space**
   Include mechanics for building, decorating, or maintaining a “home” or safe space, symbolizing stability and control.

🌍 GENERAL CONCLUSION (ALL COUNTRIES)

Across Latvia, Sweden, and Belgium, Ukrainian youth consistently express a desire for **connection, emotional safety, recognition, and meaningful participation**. Games are perceived not just as entertainment, but as **spaces for coping, expression, and belonging**.

A successful AntiLimbo game should therefore:

- Be **story-driven, emotionally engaging, and choice-based**
- Encourage **social interaction without forcing exposure**
- Validate **hybrid identities and lived experiences**
- Use **creative, exploratory, and cooperative mechanics**
- Avoid rigid testing or instruction in favor of **reflection, empathy, and hope**

The game should act as a **shared emotional and cultural space** — one that supports integration without erasing identity, and connection without pressure.

*This document is a part of the AntiLimbo project. The KA2 Small-Scale Partnership project “AntiLimbo” is run by Grem, Latvia in cooperation with MoreMosaic, Sweden and Bessonova Outdoor Immersion School, Belgium within Erasmus+ programme framework. The project aims to enhance the sense of belonging among young Ukrainian refugees in Belgium, Latvia, and Sweden, connecting them to the European Union and its cultural heritage. Through gamification and digital tools, we aim to raise awareness of European cultural history and values, fostering a deeper sense of identity with their new environment and European society. Project reference number 2024-3-LV02-KA210-YOU-000269071. Young people under 18 completed the survey with permission and under the supervision of their teachers or youth workers.

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