

# ALENTEJO

H.E.A.R.T. – Holistic Education through Active, Reflective Play, Teamwork & Territory

**Course Duration:** one week, from Monday to Saturday, 30 hours

**Location:** Alentejo - Vila Nova de Milfontes | Portugal

**Number of Participants:** Min. 6 – Max. 20



**Pedagogical  
Innovation  
Centre**

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This innovative Erasmus+ course invites educators to experience holistic education in motion — combining the power of board games with reflective play, emotional intelligence, and the cultural richness of the southwest Alentejo coast.

Rooted in experiential and game-based learning, the course fosters creativity, critical thinking, emotional awareness and community-building. The beautiful seaside village of Vila Nova de Milfontes becomes both a backdrop and a partner in learning: through guided walks, local experiences and outdoor sessions, the place itself becomes part of the pedagogy.

Participants will design and adapt educational games, engage in reflection circles, and enjoy moments of deep connection with themselves, each other, and the environment.

### Methodology

- This course is based on active, learner-centered methodologies, including:
- Experiential Learning – learning by doing, with structured reflection
- Game-Based Learning – board games as tools for meaningful engagement
- Collaborative Learning – building knowledge through teamwork and peer exchange
- Reflective Practice – through journaling, group sharing and guided discussions
- Place-Based Education – using the surrounding nature and culture as part of the learning environment

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

### Participants to the course will learn to:

- Understand the core principles of holistic education
- Identify and apply board games that support critical thinking, cooperation, creativity, and self-awareness
- Use play as a tool for emotional regulation and resilience
- Design or adapt board games to serve pedagogical goals
- Foster a classroom culture based on collaboration, reflection, and active learning
- Integrate nature and local culture as educational resources

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## Day 1

### Monday – Welcoming H.E.A.R.T.: Connection through Place and Play

- Welcome circle & course overview
- Welcome walk through Milfontes – symbolic sites, viewpoints and group games for presence and connection
- Introduction to holistic education and the power of play
- First encounter with board games as learning tools

## Day 2

### Tuesday – Strategic Thinking & Resilience through Games

- Game mechanics and cognitive skills
- Playing games that develop decision-making and foresight
- Reflection: how failure in games nurtures resilience
- Outdoor play session near the river or gardens

## Day 3

### Wednesday – Cooperation, Communication & Community

- Exploring cooperative board games
- Group dynamics and peer learning through gameplay
- Visit or short dialogue with a local community project
- Designing games inspired by collective learning

## Day 4

### Thursday – Creativity & Emotional Expression through Games

- Narrative games, symbolic thinking and self-expression
- Workshop: creating activities that foster emotional literacy
- Optional activity: expressive arts or storytelling with local inspiration
- Sunset reflection walk by the ocean

## Day 5

### Friday – From Theory to Practice

- Game adaptation/design lab: developing games for your own students
- Presentations of mini-game projects
- Evaluating holistic learning impact
- Sharing of resources and peer feedback
- Group lunch with traditional Alentejo food

## Day 6

### Saturday – Reflect, Celebrate & Walk Forward

- Final reflection circle: what we learned, what we carry forward
- Personal journaling and collective sharing
- Certificate ceremony in nature
- Guided walk along the coastal trail – pause for silence, reflection and closure