INGAME – Gaming for Social Inclusion and Civic Participation – A holistic approach for a cultural shift in education and policy

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ABOUT THE RESEARCH

by project coordinator

The report is developed in the frames of the INGAME project (Gaming for Social Inclusion and Civic Participation - A holistic approach for a cultural shift in education and policy) funded by the EU and represents one of the specific deliverables of Work Package 2 (Mapping the INGAME Ecosystem of Needs, Practices Target Groups, Stakeholders and Mode of Work).
The research conducted for WP2 aims to identify existing good practices and, where possible, to reinforce them. Research also aim towards identifying gaps and issues in existing practices - in particular, the difficulty of involving young people (18-35) in issues of civic participation, social inclusion and gender equality.

CONTRIBUTION OF PARTNERS

by Oxfam Italia

Currently, one of the most advanced tools in the training scenario is represented by serious games, capable of combining the game with educational elements. Their purpose is to share, in a playful context, an effective and pleasant training experience in which the user, and his choices, are at the heart of the game.

One example is **Maggie. The treasure of Sehat.** The game was created to tackle important mathematical issues. Maggie is not a scientist and to continue the adventure she must acquire specific scientific skills. In this way the most important concepts are presented in a non-invasive way, becoming an engaging part of the story without distorting it. Playing boys and girls in the role of a nice, adventurous, curious, brave, determined problem-solver, at ease with logical, mathematical thinking, capable of achieving successful goals is a transversal way to propose a different model of femininity.

by Romanian Literacy Association

The Romanian legislative framework allows the use of the game as a tool in any field of activity, although there are no studies related to the needs or the impact of such strategies. The civic participation of young people is not quantified, the only statistics being punctual, by projects, and belong to the NGOs that have carried out activities in this field.

It is worth it to note that our respondents are positive and open to learning more things about gamification through training sessions, platforms, workshops, conferences and practical experiences.

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Most of the Romanian young people have good digital skills and for them being connected online is better than being face to face. On the other hand, it

is important for them to understand that social inclusion means civic engagement, participation and presence in real life.

by Symplexis – Greece

Based on the findings of the needs assessment exercise in Greece, both positive and critical voices on the use of technology in promoting social inclusion and equal participation were raised. Notwithstanding the negative attitudes towards the use of technology in these fields, the vast majority appeared to be positively inclined toward the utilization of ICT as a powerful mean to enhance access to information and promote communication.

by Educational Association Anatolia (EAA)

The Greek research participants share common ideas of what civic engagement means to them. Generally, they mentioned the importance of civic engagement in the community and politics. More specifically, they agree that civic engagement shapes and benefits the community. What they also have in common is the belief that there is an obvious link between the political aspect of societies and civic engagement. They believe that civic engagement makes civil society stronger, democracy healthier, and provide solutions to public matters. Most of the respondents associate civic engagement with democratic mindsets and practices. Young people raise key ideas and principles of democracy as they perceive them, e.g. a balanced understanding between rights and responsibilities or serving the common good and shared goals. Furthermore, they highlight practical activities and the active form of engagement that matches such a mindset, e.g. voluntarism, bringing about change to one's community and working for better futures–all this with a problem-solving mentality.

by USAL SPAIN

From recent studies, positive values of solidarity and civic commitment emerge which are also confirmed by the small survey developed in the

project. There is a demand for concrete initiatives, even if it seems that young people, in general, do not receive sufficient information through their communication channels (they are not proactive or do not have

examples of good practices or specific activities by hand). On some occasions, there is pessimism regarding the youth response (lack of time, interest ...) and they see many dangers in the digital world (individualism, risks in online interaction ...)

by USAL ZB&V – Netherlands

In our national report, Dutch game developers revealed that assignments for serious games are being given, but generally limited to informal ('unofficial') education. The focus is mainly social inclusion and citizenship, but strangely enough not gender equality. However, research also showed that when people are kept engaged in a serious ('political') game and finish it, they will also involve (and talk to) their environment about its content and become more active in society.

Our survey showed that most of our respondents (age 18-35) feel involved in society, or at least want to feel involved. Most of them also want to be *actively* involved (active citizenship, 'monitoring citizens'). It was striking that there is hardly any familiarity with (online) serious games related to the topics chosen by INGAME, probably also because this is a more recent development. Most respondents have confidence in technologies and (online) gaming as a knowledge provider, provided that conditions of 'entertainment' (game), challenge and user-friendliness are met. There were a few respondents who seemed somehow intimidated by the "big questions" asked and found it difficult to say anything about the possible role of technology on the basis of these broad concepts.

From the Dutch perspective, we have to be aware that there is still a 'diploma democracy' in the Netherlands: higher educated (young) citizens are represented in democracy (and its institutions) than the less educated. Our respondents were higher

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educated. The educational background plays an important, maybe even crucial role in becoming interested in democracy and democratic values.

INGAME's audience of 18-35-year-olds is larger than the higher educated, so it may be of paramount importance that we don't make the threshold too high to get into a serious game.

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