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**INGAME**  
Gaming for Social Inclusion and Civic Participation

# INGAME

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

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## National Report: Romania

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<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1. Aim/Objectives of Report.....	4
<b>2. Key findings from Desk Research: the national context.....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1. Legal and institutional framework regarding youth policies and civic engagement and social inclusion .....	6
<b>3. Civic participation and educational play as a measure of inclusion .....</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1. Play as a means of integration for children with SEN.....	9
3.2. The game as a didactic, learning activity .....	10
<b>4. Gaming, an innovative means of learning. Good practices examples .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>5. Key findings from Field Research: need assessment .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>6. Conclusions .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>7. References .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>8. Annexes .....</b>	<b>21</b>
8.1. Annex 1: Questionnaire 1 - Evaluation grid.....	21
8.2. Annex 2: Questionnaire 12- Evaluation grid.....	25
8.3. Annex 3: Questionnaire 3- Evaluation grid.....	31

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Aim/Objectives of Report

This report is part 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 project aims at increasing youth civic participation and social inclusion by developing their skills in using gaming as a tool for developing critical thinking, social acceptance and involvement in the society.

The first official document regarding youth public policies, in Romania was developed in 2001 – The National Action Plan for Youth. In this document there were stipulated the main objectives in terms of youth participation to: education, economy, culture, civic and education. In the same document there were plans and actions for reducing the youth exclusion, stimulating youth creativity and promoting European mobility for young people.

In 2014, the Romanian Government a strategy for youth called National Strategy for Youth 2014-2020, which is still in place. In this official document there is a list of the legal documents regarding youth rights in the Romanian context.

In Romania live more than 6 million young people aged 15-34 years old, almost 30% of the total population. We have a decrease in terms of youth, many of them living outside the country, as a result of their decision to study abroad or the work in different foreign countries. It is important to note that in Romania children and young people are most exposed to poverty and social exclusion, according to the Strategy. More than one third of the young people are in risk of poverty and social exclusion, the highest rate in Europe. Also, more than 60% of the young people live with their parents, in the same houses, while in EU this rate was around 48%, says the strategy. The occupancy rate among young people was 20,6% in 2014. More than that, the occupancy rate among young girls was 16,1%. In 2012, 16,8% of the Romanian youth were included in the NEET category – youth with no professional involvement.

The Youth National Strategy 2014-2020 was supposed to solve some of the issues listed so far, in order to meet the European targets in terms of youth policies.

The Youth National Strategy aimed to support youth active engagement in the economic, social, educational, cultural and political life of the country. The main intervention domains included in this Strategy are:

1. Education and culture
2. Health, sport and free time activities
3. Civic participation and volunteering
4. Labor and entrepreneurship

This document has also measures regarding social inclusion of young people, especially of those vulnerable.

At the moment there is no any official documents related to gamification. There are private initiatives to promoting gamification among youth, mainly for fun. Meanwhile it is important to note that in the Romanian teachers use a play as a teaching method. Not yet gamification, viewed as a means to spend free time.

The first part of the report analyses the current degree of civic participation of young people in Romania, the active policies in the field of civic engagement, gender equality and social inclusion.

The participation of young people takes place through all kinds of activities, but also through digital media, especially social media. Meanwhile, the report tries to explain how Romanian teachers understand play as a teaching method, being different from gamification, which is not so much used in the educational settings.

The second part of the report the presents the results of the survey carried out through three online questionnaires addressed to young people aged between 18 and 35 and to the relative main stakeholders (members of youth organizations, NGOs, voluntary associations, etc.).

The survey should have been based on the implementation of two focus groups, but the COVID crisis, for safety reason, has led to the decision of carrying on this activity online.

The conclusions show the main evidences that have emerged from these approaches, in order to find ideas for the development of the INGAME.

The documentation aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the situation regarding the civic participation of young people and social inclusion in Romania?
2. What is the situation of using gaming in facilitating and improving the civic participation of young people and social inclusion in Romania?

3. What are the needs of young people in these two aspects: civic participation and social inclusion?

## 2. Key findings from Desk Research: the national context

### 2.1. Legal and institutional framework regarding youth policies and civic engagement and social inclusion

In the Romanian institutional language, the concept of inclusion and social development came into use starting with 2001, with the adoption of GD 829/2002, regarding the National Plan for Anti-Poverty and Promotion of Social Inclusion - PNAinc. One of the defining documents for the fight against social exclusion and the promotion of social inclusion is the JIM (Joint Document in the field of Social Inclusion - Join Inclusion Memorandum). It was developed by the Romanian Government together with the European Commission, in order to promote social inclusion and fight poverty in Europe by 2010, with a view to achieving the Lisbon objectives. Social inclusion has become a national priority, especially after Romania's integration into the European Union. This was materialized through various projects and strategies that targeted people considered at risk. In the following, we will refer to only a few documents undertaken by the Government related to social inclusion and areas of interest, education and poverty.

Thus, the "**National Strategy on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction for the period 2015-2020**" recorded, in 2013, a poverty rate of 22.4% and showed that the main vulnerable groups in Romania are: (1) Poor people, (2) Children and young people without parental care and support, (3) Elderly or dependent people, (4) Roma, (5) People with disabilities, (6) Other vulnerable groups, (7) People living in marginalized communities. The document also mentions rural / urban disparities in terms of poverty and mentions that in 2012, 11 percent of people living in urban areas were at risk of poverty, while 38 percent of those living in rural areas were at risk of poverty.

According to the age criteria, children and young people were the most affected at the time of drawing up the Strategy. Thus, 34% of children under 17 and 31.5% of those aged 18 to 25 were considered poor. Among children aged 7-14 living in families, those with disabilities, Roma children and poor children face a disproportionately high risk of being outside the education system. In addition, at the national level, the share of adolescents aged 15-18, not enrolled in school or

training, reached 11 percent in the period 2009-2012, the rates in urban areas being much lower than in rural areas, it is shown in Strategy. Moreover, “the participation of members of vulnerable groups in voluntary activities is almost non-existent and is not encouraged by the current legislative framework. The level of trust is low and has been on a downward trend since 2009. The level of tolerance for vulnerable groups has increased significantly in recent years, but discrimination continues to contribute to the social exclusion of these groups. The use of technologies, ICT, and innovative services is sporadic in the social sector ”, says the Government. The cited document is a programmatic one, of intention, without levers on the legislative or executive areas.

In 2015, another “programmatic document” appeared, “**The Romanian Government's Strategy for the inclusion of Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority for the period 2014-2020**”. According to official data, 621,573 people declared Roma, which represents 3.3% of a total of 18,884,831 people for whom ethnicity could be identified and who are part of the stable population of Romania. The document takes into account that the figures with which it operates could be false: "estimates of the number of Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority are not consistent, the Council of Europe operating, for example, with 1,850,000 people, while other ANR studies and the World Bank estimated the number of those living in compact communities with a high share of Roma at a maximum of 1 million people. However, a comparative analysis was conducted related to the level of education of Romanian, Hungarian and Roma ethnic groups, which shows that over 14% of ethnic Roma are illiterate.

	HE %	High school %	Secondary %	No schooling but literate %	No schooling and illiterate %
Romanians	14,8	42,3	26,6	13,8	1
Hungarians	10,2	46,2	30,5	11,1	0,8
Roma	0,7	9,2	35,7	34,2	14,1
Total	2372833	7004515	4555840	2387870	229721

Education image for the main ethnic groups in Romania (2011 Census)

In Romania, the kindergarten enrolment rate for Roma children aged 3-6 is much lower than that of the majority population, 37% for Roma children vs. 77% in non-Roma children. Two out of ten Roma children do not go to school, the most common reason being the lack of financial resources. One in six Roma parents explains the poor school participation of children through ethnic discrimination. Over 80% of Roma parents say they want at least secondary education for their children, but more than 75% of Roma children do not finish 8 grades, the Strategy also shows.

Based on statistical data, the Strategy aims at social inclusion by creating national programs to regulate early education, expanding the "School after school" and "Second Chance" programs and initiating programs to improve the socio-economic situation of Roma communities.

In 2019, the **National Institute of Statistics** launched the paper "Dimensions of social inclusion in Romania, in 2018". Estimated on the basis of total disposable income, excluding the value of consumption of own resources of the household, the relative poverty rate in 2018 was 23.5%, higher by a percentage than in 2013. In absolute terms, the number of poor corresponding to this rate was of 4.6 million people. "Over the entire period analysed, the highest incidence of poverty was recorded among children and young people up to 18 years, about a third of them were below the poverty line, well above the levels corresponding to adults," it reads in the study.

At national level, **the at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate (AROPE) was 32.5% in 2018**, corresponding to 6.4 million people. **Age seems to play an important role, the AROPE indicator being higher in children (38.1%) and in young people in the 18-24 age group (36.7%)** decreasing in people aged 25-49 (28, 7%). **The level of training also has a major impact on the AROPE indicator. In 2018, a share of 54.5% of the population with low level of education was at risk of poverty or social exclusion**, compared to 5.9% of people with higher level of education.

### **3. Civic participation and educational play as a measure of inclusion**

Centralized data on the civic participation of pupils, young people or the general population do not exist. Activities were held on time, mainly with the support of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and sometimes with European financial support. Reports and statistics remained for internal use, not being centralized or entered into regional or national databases.

The game approach has emerged and developed in the last 10-15 years as a branch of non-formal education. It was successful because it was perceived as a modern method of teaching, easily accepted by students. There are no official statistics in this area on the efficiency and effectiveness of the methods used or the number of students and teachers involved. Needs analyses, where projects and funding applications existed and substantiated, remained in the possession of applicants and were not centralized.

Chronologically, three distinct major periods / directions can be distinguished, but which have begun to intersect in recent years:

- play as a means of integration for children with Special educational needs (SEN);
- the game as a didactic, learning activity;



- gaming as an innovative means of approach.

### 3.1. Play as a means of integration for children with SEN

The playful elements were used in the Romanian school both in regulated and unregulated form. We will refer only to a few documents governing the activity, and not to the entire legislative framework. In 2008, for example, the **Order of the Minister of Education, Research and Youth no. 5234 / 01.09.2008** which contained the **school play therapy program for grades I-X**. The document was included in the curricular area "Complex and integrated educational therapy" and was developed by the National Centre for Curriculum and Evaluation in Pre-University Education.

Since the Presentation Note, the normative act is presented to be one intended for the integration through play of children with SEN in mainstream education and, subsequently, in society. "The educational integration of children with moderate mental disabilities and those with severe, profound and / or associated disabilities does not mean their formal enrolment with children without disabilities, but involves developing their own work programs, articulated on common principles and inclusive strategies. (...) The curricular area "Complex and integrated educational therapy" includes the following disciplines: Formation of personal autonomy, Socialization, Occupational Therapy, Cognitive Stimulation and Play Therapy. The activities proposed within these disciplines are carried out by the teacher-educator (grades I – IV and V-X) with all students of the class, in addition to the program focused on teaching-learning- evaluation, carried out by the psychoeducational teacher and have a character of corrective-recuperative therapy. These types of activities are part of the complex, integrative program of evolution and development of children / young people with mental disabilities. Through their content, they refer predominantly to the area of personal and social development, with the ultimate goal of developing independence of the child / young person with disabilities, as well as its integration into a constantly changing environment. (..) Starting from the valences of commutative learning, the programs within the curricular area "Complex and integrated educational therapy" propose a modular intervention, realized on progressive fields. The aims of these programs have a practical character and aim at the formation of habits of personal and social autonomy, increasing the degree of adaptability of children with mental disabilities. At the basis of the recuperative learning processes are the sensory-motor education and the acquisition of personal and social autonomy, these ensuring the field of cognitive education and integration in the community".

Therefore, the document establishes a legislative framework through which the game is introduced in school, but only for therapeutic purposes and only for the integration of children with mental disabilities in mainstream education and, subsequently, in society.

The institutional acceptance of the game/play as an educational tool for integration and social inclusion has allowed the emergence of programs and projects that have extended the scope of application from children with cognitive disabilities to children from all disadvantaged categories. **Thus, the game/play was seen as a general method of inclusion.**

The project "**Let's be schoolmates**" (program that supports inclusive schooling and student-centred teaching in a multicultural environment, developed by the *Children in Difficulty* Foundation, Project No. 2018 - EY-PICR-R1- 0004, funded by Norwegian funds), generated, in 2019, a "**Collection of games that promote inclusiveness**", having as author the psychologist Lorena Țoropoc. "The collection of games is addressed to teachers, specialists working in the field of psycho-education and children," says the author in the preamble.

The paper is structured in 4 chapters and aims at **personal development games, communication games, games with repetitive rules and games to promote group cohesion.** "Each chapter contains a number of 4 games that can be applied within the group of students", it is also shown in the introduction. The games described in the paper are "Soul Objects", "Mirror of Your Own Emotions", "Appreciation Bracelet", "Friendship Tree", "Barrier", "Our Story", "I Received a Message", "From Man to Man", "Through the forest", "Elements of nature", "Attention come sharks", "Counting", "Guess who it is?", "A sign - a name", "Our identity", "Don't be upset".

Over time, hundreds of NGO projects have been implemented to integrate non-special education needs children through play. An example to mention is related to the educational activities in hospitals, intended for children with temporary illnesses. In June 2019, the Inocenti Foundation carried out the project "Multi-art in the hospital" through which therapeutic activities were organized through play for children hospitalized at the Children's Clinical Hospital "Dr. Victor Gomoiu" from Bucharest. Activities included arts & crafts, group games, speech therapy, massage and counselling.

### 3.2. The game as a didactic, learning activity

Beyond the activity related to children with SEN, the game/play became generalized in the teaching activity. Modern methodologies have called for interactivity and guided teachers to

educational games. These have been theorized, classified and structured according to objectives, but there are no statistics in this area that reveal the importance, impact or need for play.

Regardless of the school age segment on which the game was applied as part of the didactic approach, the teachers considered that it has a double role: facilitating learning and a moment of relaxation followed by focusing on the next sequence. Starting from the idea of facilitating learning, it was empirically observed that playful activity can be used in all sequences of the lesson: breaking ice, updating, fixing, evaluating, and feedback. The games used are usually familiar to children, but there are situations in which the game is adapted to the group of students and their needs. Sometimes, children are challenged to invent their own game, which leads to the gamification area.

Any game involves rules, non-compliance with them attracts sanctions and compliance with and reaching the end of the game brings bonuses. In the didactic approach, teachers pay attention to the communicative support in which they organize the game: some games require speech, others capitalize on the written material - letter or online.

#### **4. Gaming, an innovative means of learning. Good practices examples**

References to gaming are relatively recent and have appeared, mostly, in non-formal media (blogs and FB posts) or in niche publications. A chronology of gamification in Romania starts from Erasmus projects.

The project **“ProActive: Encouraging Teacher Creativity through Game Based Learning”** (505469 - LLP - 1-2009-1 - ES - KA3 - KA3MP) can be considered one of the pioneers, especially because it provided as a resource the material **“When educators become creators of games. A guide to creative game-based learning practices”**. The project proposed a four-step methodology for teachers and instructors from different educational sectors. Through workshops, teachers and instructors from 23 pilot sites in Spain, the United Kingdom, Italy and Romania used two publishers to create educational games "e-Adventure" (an open source application for creating adventure games) and “EUTOPIA” (a free tool for creating educational scenarios in a 3D environment). The scenarios were subsequently tested in real time.

One of the first concrete references to the concept of gamification dates back to 2015, when Adriana Șurcă published on the E.learning Romania website the article **“Integration in education of Gamification and Game-Based Learning strategies - between trend and demand”**. The author, a teacher from Târgu Jiu, is limited to conceptual

delimitations. ( <http://www.elearning.ro/integrarea-in-educatie-a-strategiilor-de-gamification-si-game-based-learning-intre-trend-si-exigenta> )

In 2016, the Digi24 television station took over part of Adriana Șurcă's exposure, which already used gamification in the preparatory class. The teacher had been trained in Spain, within the course "**Game-Based learning and Gamification**" ( <https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/actualitate/educatie/o-metoda-revolutionara-de-predare-in-scoli-acum-si-in-romania-517723> ).

The same Adriana Șurcă publishes, also in 2016, a text about gamification in the magazine "Tribuna Învățământului". In the article **Using online platforms in the gamification of lessons** ( <https://tribunainvatamantului.ro/2016/10/16/utilizare-platformelor-online-in-gamificare-lectiilor/> ), the author recommends the use of several platforms:

"1. **Plickers** (<https://plickers.com/>) is a platform and application that allows the teacher to assess students' knowledge in real time and generate related statistics per class and per student. It costs nothing, you have to create an account, follow the presentation of the platform's functionalities, register your class of students, generate Plickers cards for students, distribute them to them (they can be used countless times), create the list of questions, install your Plickers application on your mobile phone, which only needs to have a single camera, then present the students' questions one by one, on a video projector or on paper. Then you "read" from a distance, in a silent game, with the application installed on the phone the correct answer options, which the students show you with the cards. Students like this dumb game because of the element of surprise, and you will like it more, because they can't be inspired by each other. The feedback you will provide for the answers received will motivate the students even more. It is good for students not to see the nominal statistics per class, but only the quantitative ones, so as not to generate frustrations. As in any game, students suffer enough if they do not perform. Plickers' "game" encourages them to be better "next time".

2. **AnswerGarden** (<https://answergarden.ch/>) is an online platform for the frontal, anonymous collection of answers to open, short questions that we want to debate, without knowing who is the author of one or the other of the answers which students enter from their mobile phones and which appear in real time in front of everyone's eyes on the screen in front of the classroom, via the computer connected to the internet. You don't even have to create an account. Students must install a QR Code Reader application on their phones. In the first phase, you write in real time the question, to which the platform generates a QR Code, which can be read with the phone by students. This reading paves the way for their answer, and they introduce a short answer. It

immediately appears on the screen. The answers are debated, feedback is given. The students like it because the shy ones get involved, because they can't be ashamed of the mistake, not knowing who answered. In addition, the debates will no longer be "personal", but focused on content.

3. **Socrative** (<http://www.socrative.com/>) is a very useful platform that can replace the classic tests, on paper, in any discipline where you have to evaluate your academic performance. You need to create a teacher account, a student account.

4. **Classcraft** (<http://classcraft.com/>) is a class management platform for absolutely any subject of study, which allows the rewarding of learning outcomes, but also desirable behaviours. Laziness and unwanted behaviours at school can be penalized. You need to create a teacher account and associate with the account which classes you want. Students have to create accounts, in which they live learning as an adventure, because they fulfil different roles in micro groups and have different "powers", which they obtain by passing from one level to another, based on points (different categories). The platform can largely replace the electronic catalogue, as parents can create accounts that allow them access to the virtual classroom and see how their children evolve. Moreover, even parents can reward with a certain type of points the accomplishment of some tasks at home: additional homework, household chores... There is a lot of information to add about this successful platform in the world, so I recommend patience and perseverance in following the tutorials, the forum user teachers, in exploring the functionalities of the platform. The more you get involved, the more excited you will be. It is available in several languages, and behaviour descriptors can also be edited in Romanian.

5. „**Write. Fold. Pass**” (<http://foldingstory.com/>) is a platform for cultivating creativity and co-creation. A classic example: compositions with a given beginning. It can be used in modern languages, but also in Romanian, because tasks can be introduced in Romanian, although the language used on the platform is English”.

At the same time, the **Intuitext** private school was taking the first steps towards the gamification area. Under the slogan "**How you play, that's how you learn!**" the school currently offers, online, educational products based on the game ( <https://www.scoalaintuitext.ro/> ). The school is not a classic one, it is intended to be a virtual school that complements the educational system, and parents can buy packages for primary school students.

At the **National Conference on Virtual Education**, the 14th edition, organized in 2016 by the University of Craiova, Zoltán Élthes from the “Babeş-Bolyai” University of Cluj gave the lecture “**Using gamification in eLearning**”. The author reviews gamification, starting in 2002, with British developer Nick Pelling, and accepts the definition that gamification means “**the presence or**

addition of game features in activities that are not traditionally considered games. It includes in particular those computer games and online achievements that can be applied in various fields of activity". The author recommends a number of software applications for gamification that can be used in the education system.

- **ClassDojo**, a digital system for classroom management, which gamifies the education process. Allows teachers to send parents a quick message about student behaviour during class. "The principle of the application is simple. Students are represented by cute avatars, inspired by the animated film "Despicable Me". They receive points for the behaviour indicated by the teacher, such as participation, perseverance, help or leadership. Teachers can use a "smartphone" or their own computer to award points, during the training, to those who did their homework or contributed an interesting comment. The system can be accessed at <https://www.classdojo.com> .

- **GoalBook**, an application that facilitates the interaction between students, being focused on teamwork. It offers the possibility of communication between teachers, parents and students. The platform is located at <https://goalbookapp.com> .

- **CourseHero** facilitates teacher-student interaction. The program is an online portal that functions as a communication and knowledge sharing surface. The site organizes and categorizes uploaded documents, which in this way, become accessible. It offers the possibility of creating personalized learning packages as well as creating a reward system. Accessing the program: <https://www.coursehero.com> .

- **Classcraft** is a **gamification** platform similar to that of World of Warcraft. Each student can choose a character, who can be a fighter, a wizard or a therapist. If a student does a positive thing (answers a question well, helps colleagues, excels) he receives experience points. From a certain number of points he enters a higher level which gives him a number of facilities, depending on the type of character. For negative things you lose points. Zero score means the death of the character, implicitly the demotion to a lower level and related sanctions. Accessing the site: <http://www.classcraft.com> .

- **MinecraftEdu** - in this application, users can receive avatars with which they can create their own profile of the game character. There is the possibility of extending the application with new functions, such as the coordinate system, with which students and teachers can orient themselves and find themselves in the world of the program. The site can be accessed at: <http://education.minecraft.net> and <http://minecrafteu.com> .

- **Kidblog** is a program developed by teachers, based on pedagogical concepts, which provides useful tools related to the development of skills and abilities related to writing. Site address: <http://kidblog.org/home/blog>.

The economic magazine *Business Magazine* estimated, in April 2016, that gamification has a value of 2.8 billion dollars and claimed that over 70% of companies use this way of learning ( <https://www.businessmagazin.ro/cover-story/gamification-a-concept-that-appears-from-what-in-what-more-often-in-business-from-romania-15263306> ).

In 2017 there are several references to gamification. The blog *Creativity in pedagogical fields* ( <http://creativitateinpedagogie.blogspot.com/2017/03/gamificare-in-educatie.html> ) makes a short presentation of the concept and on the *Open Mind* platform ( <https://open-mind-project.eu/ro/gamification/> ); entrepreneurship courses are offered, especially for women, based on gamification. The project was based on **Erasmus funding** (Project No: 2016-1-BG01-KA203-023754) and was developed by the University Titu. In 2018, about 1,100 graduates of the course were reported ( <https://open-mind-project.eu/ro/the-open-mind-innovative-gamified-course-attracted-more-than-1100-learners-to-social-entrepreneurship/> ).

Also in 2017, the text "Gamification in education" ( <http://educationforcentury.blogspot.com/2017/03/gamification-in-educatie.html> ) appears on the *CenturY EduCatIoN* blog. The author, Adriana Cotună, makes an exhaustive presentation of gamification and recommends the use of methods in teaching. The sources from which he was inspired are Karl M. Kapp, Lucas Blair, and Rich Mesch, *Gamification of Learning and Instruction: Game-based Methods and Strategies for Training and Education*, 2013, John Wiley & Sons Publishing House and Karl M. Kapp, *Gamification of Learning and Instruction Fieldbook: Ideas into Practice*, 2012, Publisher: Pfeiffer.

After only a few months, a student at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of Bucharest, Dana Matei, publishes on her own blog ( <http://educatie-si-tic.blogspot.com/2017/04/gamification-invatarii-gamification-of.html> ) the text "Gamification of learning" which recommends the use of the method in the university environment. "The **gamification of learning** is an educational approach that motivates students to learn using the construction of video games and game elements in learning environments. Students can use programs such as Gamestar Mechanic or GameMaker to create their own video games," the student notes.

Also in 2017, the blog *Education for All* publishes the text "Gamification in education" ( <http://educatiapentruviitor.blogspot.com/2017/03/gamification-in-educatie.html> ), a text not

assumed by signature. The material resumes the concepts related to gamification, without details and without examples.

Undated and unsigned site *Thpanorama* ( <https://ro.thpanorama.com/blog/psicologia/lam-gamificacin-y-sus-4-beneficios-en-educacin.html> )- there is a material that promotes and distributes a gamification video clip taken from CNN ( <https://youtu.be/SqmIJB6YRQ> ).

In 2017, the Erasmus + project “Apprenticeship Model for developing Entrepreneurial skills” (2017-1-FR01-KA202-037277), through the Trainers' Guide, developed, in Chapter V, the Methodology for incorporating gamification elements in entrepreneurship education.

Principiile de gamificare în educație sunt clasificate în două categorii: reguli (curs de proiectare) și Play (curs de punere în aplicare).

Reguli	
<b>Învățarea prin a face</b>	Învățarea este un proces activ, prin urmare, trebuie să se angajeze jucători în producție, nu doar de consum.
<b>Asumarea riscului</b>	Jocurile sunt medii deschise pentru a fi explorate și manipulate. Eșecurile sunt făcute "mize mici", astfel încât ucenicii sunt încurajați să-și asume riscuri.
<b>Provocări deschise</b>	Pentru a permite ucenicilor să-și personalizeze progresul și să aleagă din mai multe soluții.
<b>Obiective-și sarcini orientate</b>	Activitățile ar trebui să fie structurate în jurul obiectivelor și sarcinilor, mai degrabă decât instrucțiunile. Sarcinile sunt de obicei realizate într-un "ciclu de expertiză", creat de activități care promovează o alternanță de provocare și consolidare.
<b>Nivelul competențelor</b>	Provocarea cu care se confruntă ar trebui să fie perfect echilibrată cu nivelul de aptitudini și abilități ale ucenicilor, pentru a-i lăsa în condițiile de îndeplinire a sarcinilor care se concentrează asupra acesteia, blocând distragerile și un nivel ridicat de efort.
JOCUL	
<b>Agenția</b>	Ucenicii ar trebui să se simtă ca ei sunt în controlul a ceea ce se întâmplă. Jocurile ar trebui să le creeze propria identitate.
<b>Mediu sigur pentru eșecuri</b>	Eșecul este tratat ca o componentă naturală a învățării. Jucătorii nu sunt judecați și nici pedepsiți pentru asta. Feedbacks ar trebui să reflecte acest lucru și să ia în considerare eșecul ca o componentă de experiență, precum și o componentă de regulă.
<b>Performanța înainte de competență</b>	Ucenicii ar trebui să practice înainte de a demonstra că sunt experți. Acesta nu ar trebui să fie dat un test de la început pentru a dovedi că pot face ceva. Informațiile trebuie furnizate "la timp" și "la cerere".
<b>Întelegerea situației</b>	Câștigul ar trebui să fie pus în context și să li se acorde valoarea sa reală, în funcție de unde, când și de modul în care este implementată o activitate.

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*Magazine* ( <https://revistaprofesorului.ro/gamification-procesului-de-educatie/> ) the text entitled "Gamification of the education process". The text is a general one, without details and without examples of good practice, and only signals the existence of gaming. Published in 2018, the publication contains only 121 texts, but belongs to the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Bucharest, and is registered with ISSN.

On the page of the private school **Aletheea**, undated, appeared the text “Gamification in education. Class management through play”( <https://www.aletheea.ro/gamification-in-educatie-managementul-clasei-prin-joc/> ). The text gives a presentation from an internal conference and only presents the idea of gamification, without examples and without case studies.



The educational portal **edupedu.ro** signalled, in May 2019, that a Romanian project for gamification of lessons can be considered an example of good practice ( <https://www.edupedu.ro/gamificare-lectiilor-un-proiect-din-romania-success-story-and-example-of-good-practice-in-europe/> ). In fact, it is an Erasmus + project from 2015, **Gamify Your Teaching**, implemented by a consortium of 7 European countries: Romania, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Great Britain, Spain and Greece. The project also included a needs analysis on the level of IT and entrepreneurial knowledge of teachers. Within the project, 7 learning modules were organized, specific materials were developed and 35 case studies were analysed, examples of real life business. The Romanian partner was **the National Council of Small and Medium Private Enterprises in Romania - Arad Branch**, a non-governmental and non-profit organization founded in 2004. Within the project, GAMIFY was created, an online entrepreneurial game.

'GAMIFY includes seven scenarios on various topics of entrepreneurship as follows:

- Increasing self-confidence and self-confidence
- Market research
- Set and view goals
- Understanding whether self-employment is right for me
- Development of a business model
- The role of social media in establishing a business
- How to start and run a home business”

Each teacher was invited to use the game in class and students could work individually or in pairs on a computer and an internet connection. The teacher approached the topic according to a pre-established lesson plan for each scenario and let the students play. After completing each level, the teacher gave additional explanations and discussed with the players about what they learned, understood, discovered, about their personal opinions and reactions on the topic. The time allocated to each module was 45 minutes. The GAMIFY game was built as an interactive, web-based game that works in an online way and can be accessed at <http://play.gamify-project.eu> .

The project was considered an example of good practice ( <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details/#project/2015-1-RO01-KA202-014975> )

In 2019, at the **Polytechnic University of Bucharest, Doctoral School of Automation and Computers**, the doctoral thesis entitled "**Contributions to the development of virtual educational environments**" was presented. The author, Alexandru Grădinaru, talked about a case study that presents ways to gamify some subjects. "Gamification is a different concept from learning through

games. It is the process by which game elements are used in different contexts (distinct game contexts) so as to generate fun experiences with a specific purpose, usually masked. An example of gamification can be the addition of a reward system based on the results obtained in a questionnaire. It offers a purpose, clear rules and ways to receive the reward, recurring elements in the design of games ", notes Alexandru Grădinaru on page 41 of the paper. The doctoral thesis is IT in nature and is not structured on gamification as an educational process, it aims at the possible development of computer platforms that can support gamification.

In 2020, the *publication Introduction to didactic gamification. Continuous learning through play*, signed by Remus Văidăhăzan was published by **Presa Universitară Clujeană Publishing House**. According to the author, "didactic gamification behaves as a motivational information system and can be considered a set of elements (principles, procedures, means, etc.) dependent on each other and forming an organized whole, used to collect, process and transmit information in a specific way ("game design"), necessary to motivate the participants in the teaching process proposed by the teacher.

The material of the paper "Introduction to Didactic Gamification (continuous learning through play)" is organized in 4 chapters, covering its 178 pages:

- Conceptual delimitations
- Research and trends in the literature
- Own didactic gamification system
- Collection of teaching resources".

Remus Văidăhăzan did not limit himself to publishing an *Introduction to didactic gamification*. He created a youtube channel on which he uploads videos, his own creation, related to gamification. Thus, on April 23, 2020, he recommended the organization of an Escape Room as a method of gamification ( <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2xk9ib23Fo> ). The games indicated include "letter box" and "calculate in speed". A few days later, on April 26, Remuz Văidăhăzan posted a new video, through which he brought additional explanations and indicated online resources to use ( [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1\\_0Cuu7ugZU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_0Cuu7ugZU) ). Neither of the two videos garnered more than 200 views a month after its release, so interest was low.

## **5. Key findings from Field Research: need assessment**

This chapter provides the results of the answers of three online questionnaires, via google form, in completely anonymous form. The aim of the interviews was to investigate the degree of civic

participation of young people, their needs and the knowledge of young people and stakeholders of the existence of video games applied to civic engagement, gender equality and social inclusion. Stakeholders were also asked to explain the difficulties faced in involving young people in civic engagement activities and the factors influencing their participation.

**The first questionnaire (Q1)** answered by ten young people, five girls and five boys, 50 % between 21-25 years old, 30% between 26-30%, 20% between 31 and 35 years old, 55,6% involved in training and study activities.

People who answered are familiar with civic participation, they know what it means and relates this with their communities and activities.

Among the activities that could promote civic engagement, they said that education and trainings are very important. Meanwhile conferences, summits, meetings, trips, games without violent content are noted.

Regarding the new technologies, digital tools, virtual reality and using all kinds of devices, our respondents know about them, they use these instruments for their personal interest. They are not very familiar with using them to promote civic participation or social inclusion.

In terms of designing a game to increase social inclusion, they suggested that this should be: intuitive, competitive, friendly menu, background music, different levels of complexity.

**The second questionnaire (Q2)** addressed to project stakeholders. 8 people answered; members of public institutions for youth (3); training organizations for youth (2); civil organizations (2); international organizations (1).

The main factors influencing civic engagement our respondents mentioned: education, motivation, family background, personal experiences.

The activities that could increase civic engagement of youth, they indicated: information and awareness campaigns, trainings, public debates, political involvement, civic education, internships.

The main difficulties they encounter in civic engagement are lack of time, no intrinsic motivation, lack of coordination from adults, lack of role models in the society, lack of financial resources.

The respondents are very positive when it comes about INGAME game. They suggested that this should be interactive, user friendly, ease to be accessed, simulation of life situations, attractive characters, to give you a feedback at the end.

**The third questionnaire (Q3)** answered by 30 young people aged between 18 and 35: 76% female and 24% male. 46,7% between 31-35 years old; 23,3% between 26-30%; 23,3% between 21-25%.

## 6. Conclusions

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.

The game is used primarily in teaching activities and gamification appears in isolation and not as a mass phenomenon. The Romanian curriculum does not include any learning activities based on gamification. Also, teachers are not familiar to use gamification in the teaching process.

Meanwhile in the private sector it has started the development of the gamification industry, especially for fun. In their free time Romanian young people play game, they interact, communicate and feel good being online together. NGO-s have started to use gamification in their programs to integrate people with disabilities and also to increase youth participation in the civic life.

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

For the Romanian context it is necessary to bring this topic of civic engagement and social inclusion using gamification to a higher level of decision makers and make them aware of the benefits of this new way to bring people together for a better life.

## 7. References

National strategy for Young People, 2014-2020, Romanian Government

National Strategy for Social Inclusion, 2015-2020, Romanian Government

National Strategy for social inclusion of disabled people, 2014-2020, Romanian Government

National Strategy for Social Inclusion and Reducing Poverty, 2015-2020, Romanian Government

Education for All, UNICEF, 2015

Access to Education for Youth with Disabilities, Manea, L. (2016)

## 8. Annexes

### 8.1. Annex 1: Questionnaire 1 - Evaluation grid

Evaluation grid: questionnaire 1 (target group)		
Partner	Asociatia Romana de Literatie	
Age profile of the participants <i>(please insert the number of people belonging to each age /</i>	<u>  2  </u> 18-20 <u>  5  </u> 21-25	
<i>)</i>	<u>  3  </u> 26-30 <u>    </u> 31-35	
Number of participants and their gender split	Females: <b>5</b>	Males: <b>5</b>
In minimum 2 pages and maximum 4 pages:		
Question n°	Common theme	Contrasting
5. What does civic engagement mean to you?	<p>Different forms of action that can guide people to be more involved.</p> <p>Commitment and responsibility to society and everything around us.</p> <p>Promoting the attributions of everything that means life, respecting other lives and learning / educating how to behave in a society, to help when needed and to know how to respect the other.</p> <p>Active involvement in the community for improving quality of life, both locally/nationally and internationally through summits, public meetings, position papers, etc.</p>	

<p>6. What kind of activities do you think should be delivered to increase the participation of young adult in public life in general and more specifically, their civic engagement?</p>	<p>Education and information activities on civic spirit and civic involvement.</p> <p>Conferences, summits, meetings on issues related to education, family, civic involvement, development opportunities for young people, meetings on youth issues and the difficulties they face in the fields in which they work.</p>	
<p>7. Do you know any policies, practices and interventions for promoting young civic engagement, social inclusion and gender equality? If so, should they improve or change?</p>	<p>Volunteering.</p> <p>Trainings and information campaigns.</p> <p>Creating and launching the resolution of young people in the N-E region of Romania</p> <p>„ Me and Democracy, - had the role of active involvement of young people in discussions and activities to find out new information and mechanisms to improve the unfavorable situation in Romania, especially in the field of social economy.</p>	<p>I know organizations that promote civic involvement but people are not interested in the subject. Promotion methods need to be improved.</p>

<p>8. Are you aware of new technologies (digital tools and mobile devices like GPS, PDAs, Tablet PCs, Virtual Reality, hand-held technologies, mobile learning technologies, etc.) and innovative approaches (like for example Online Gaming, Serious Games, Game-based Learning) that can be used to discuss global issues, like social inclusion and gender equality? If yes, have you ever used them and why?</p>	<p>Computer and various communication applications and platforms.-used for personal development and communication / relationship. Phone applications. Like GPS. Various general culture games and more, even games for relaxation.</p>	<p>Not aware of technologies or innovative approaches to help discuss social inclusion, gender equality, etc.</p>
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<p>9. We are developing an online game, called INGAME which will allow users to learn from simulated experience enhancing critical reflection on social and political circumstances, build skills and stimulate interest for collective action. What would an online game like INGAME need to attract your interest? Which features would you like the game to have?</p>	<p>To be intuitive, to offer the possibility to choose in which areas you want to get involved, to play different levels of complexity, easy, medium, hard, to offer the possibility to create your own game strategy and depending on the chosen options the player can choose for himself at some point how he wants the game to run.</p> <p>A game of attention.</p> <p>Be online to help the community grow.</p> <p>Let it be a competitive game.</p> <p>Easy to understand menu, depending on age, interactive games of all categories, background music, a color not hard to bear in the eyes, updated monthly.</p> <p>Contain a feature that helps people understand how dangerous discrimination and racism are.</p> <p>High interaction between the characters of the action.</p> <p>Diversity of choice.</p>	
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<p>10. Do you have additional notes or suggestions that you think could be useful for our research?</p>	<p>I believe in such a potential for the community and I believe that relationships will develop through a game too! Success!!</p> <p>Let's meet more often, play interactive games, do things that honor us and help those in need.</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAWJlxO2hW0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAWJlxO2hW0</a>- an example to not feel different :)</p> <p>The correct commitment of the game, like not to be laughed at. Some people perceive an application with games just as a fad for the moment. Make it easy to unwind and unwind, that is, to catch as much as possible, to want to be "played".</p>	
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## 8.2. Annex 2: Questionnaire 2- Evaluation grid

Evaluation grid: questionnaire 2 (stakeholders)		
Partner	Asociatia Romana de Literatie	
Age profile of the participants <i>(please insert the number of people belonging to each age / age group)</i>	19-25 years <input type="checkbox"/> 26-35 years <b>(1)</b> 36-45 years <b>(3)</b> 46-55 years <b>(4)</b> Above 55 years <input type="checkbox"/>	
Number of participants and their gender split	Females: <b>4</b> Males: <b>4</b>	
In minimum 2 pages and maximum 4 pages:		
Question n°	Common theme	Contrasting findings

<p>4. Which factors influence the civic engagement of young adult?</p>	<p>Education - in family and school. Integrating civic engagement into the values recognized by society / organizations.</p> <p>Youth responsibility in solving some community problems, the importance given to some proposals coming from them, the observance of some wishes expressed and supported in public.</p> <p>Similarities with their own life experiences, circle of friends, the visibility of the sustained cause.</p> <p>Motivation, desire to improve, social category, environment of origin.</p> <p>Significance, sense of belonging and identification at the level of values.</p>	
<p>5. What kind of activities do you think should be delivered to increase the participation of young adult in public life in general and more specifically, their civic engagement?</p>	<p>Information and awareness campaigns, trainings, public debates, political involvement.</p> <p>Activities to address issues of the group / class they belong to, entertainment activities organized on a voluntary basis, activities to raise awareness of their role and decision-making power as a group, various civic actions supported by their favorite radio, TV channels, etc.</p> <p>Civic education at school, participation in practical activities such as simulated processes, school elections, etc.</p> <p>Volunteer activities, awareness of the impact of these activities on personal and professional development, internships in specialized</p>	

<p>6. What are the main difficulties you face in involving young people in civic engagement activities?</p>	<p>Lack of time.</p> <p>Lack of intrinsic motivation, low responsibility in assuming tasks and reporting deliverables, abandonment during the activities undertaken.</p> <p>Lack of coordination from adults to provide them with models and examples, lack of role models in society, media services that do not necessarily promote success but only failures.</p> <p>Relationship mediated by social networks, to the detriment of direct, personal dialogue; the opinion that their opinion is not taken into account; excessive promotion of corruption cases in the media.</p> <p>Awareness of the usefulness, necessity and importance of these activities not only for the beneficiaries but especially for those who carry them out.</p> <p>Their motivation in the first phase, then constancy in supporting some activities.</p> <p>Lack of financial resources, distrust in the success of their actions.</p>	
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<p>7. In your area of work, do you know of successful initiatives aimed to improve civic participation of young people and their attention to social inclusion or gender equality issues? If so, which are the main elements of success?</p>	<p>The involvement of young people in various projects with non-reimbursable funding, in which the fact that they are remunerated, determines them to get involved.</p> <p>There are activities such as physical caravans, promotion and support in the process of admitting students to colleges, in which young people participate voluntarily, aware of their impact on professional development. A good CV since college helps them find a job.</p> <p>The national campaigns supported within the National Strategy for Community Action that promote volunteering for students and young people through local and national initiatives aimed at developing altruism and their involvement in activities that develop civic and community spirit.</p> <p>Marketing around initiatives, exposure and competition.</p> <p>Proper motivation, sometimes "constraint" in the sense of negotiation, you do this you get this, the visibility of the actions taken.</p> <p>Organizational leadership, resource management, motivation strategies.</p>	<p>No, not significant ones.</p>
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<p>8. Are you aware of new technologies (digital tools and mobile devices, Virtual Reality, hand-held technologies, mobile learning technologies, etc.) and innovative approaches (like for example Online Gaming, Serious Games, Game-based Learning) that can be used to discuss global issues, like social</p>	<p>We use international platforms - yammer, teams to discuss issues of inclusion and develop support and communication networks.</p> <p>In current activities with students and teachers who participate in training as there is a need to adapt learning to the interests of students.</p> <p>They are indispensable during this period, they facilitate communication in record time, they offer practical approaches to the problems of contemporary society.</p>	<p>No.</p>
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<p>9. We are developing an online game, called INGAME which will allow users to learn from simulated experience enhancing critical reflection on social and political circumstances, build skills and stimulate interest for collective action. What would an online game like INGAME need to attract young interest? Which features would you like the game to have?</p>	<p>To be primarily available in several foreign languages in order to be able to promote it in international organizations. To be interactive and user friendly.</p> <p>Be collaborative online multiplayer.</p> <p>To have a practical part and not only a theoretical part - a practical component, with real examples of good practices.</p> <p>The application should be easy to access. Visual elements to attract.</p> <p>Simulation of life situations.</p> <p>Based on positive memory and empathy.</p> <p>Adequate dynamics.</p> <p>Attractive characters.</p> <p>To combine in a beautiful way music and color.</p> <p>It would be necessary to have a great applicability in real plan.</p> <p>To have variants adapted to several age groups; to have a story, to be affordable.</p> <p>To offer you the possibility to choose a character from a given number of characters / typologies (gender, skin color, religious, political, sexual orientation, clothing gender, etc.) and then to offer you the possibility to make choices with him in all kinds of life situations. To have to do all kinds of missions with him and to have innumerable possibilities to accomplish them, from the legal ones to the illegal ones. At the end of the game to make you, for example, a psychological profile with good and bad, to confront who you are; or at the end of each mission to give you feedback on the chosen option (s).</p>	
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10. Do you have additional notes or suggestions that you think could be useful for our research?	Work with experienced people from indie gaming studios. There's a lot of insight out there and cool people you could collaborate with.  Interesting concept! Success!	No.
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### 8.3. Annex 3: Questionnaire 3- Evaluation grid

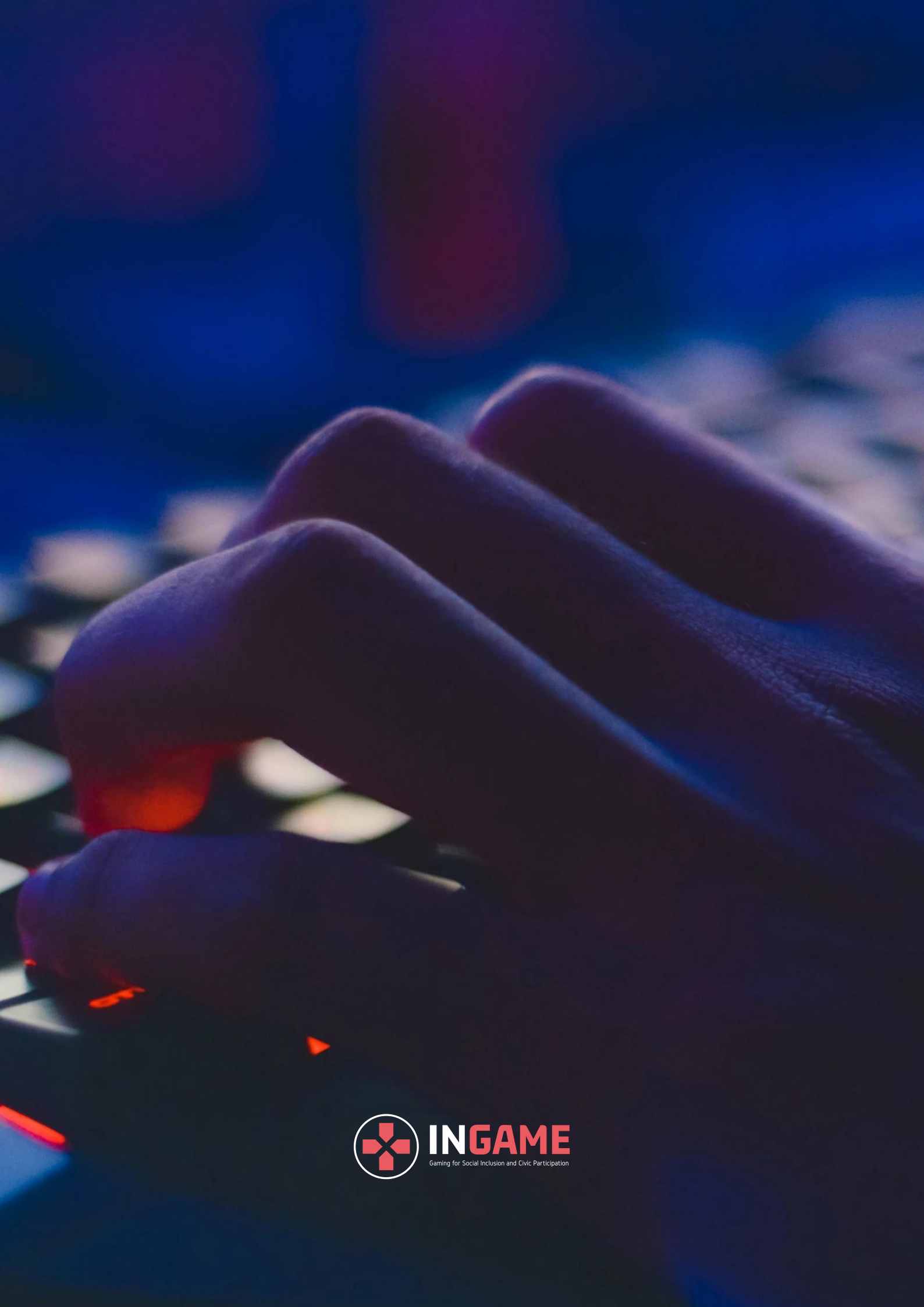
Evaluation grid: questionnaire 3 (target group)		
Partner	Asociatia Romana de Literatie	
Age profile of the participants <i>(please insert the number of people belonging to each age / age group)</i>	<u>2</u> 18-20 <u>7</u> 21-25  <u>7</u> 26-30 <u>14</u> 31-35	
Number of participants in and their gender split	Females: <b>23</b> Males: <b>7</b>	
In minimum 2 pages and maximum 4 pages:		
Question n°	Common theme	Contrasting findings
Q3. Are you currently engaged in a study or work activity?	<b>Yes: 30</b>	
Q4. If yes, which one?	Higher vocational education and university: <b>11</b>  Work activity: <b>19</b>	

<p>Q5. What does civic engagement mean to you?</p>	<p>Most of the participants responded that responsibility and respect towards the community is a main component, staying informed, ready for action and voting is another aspect of civic engagement. being helpful towards the ones around us.</p>	
<p>Q6. Have you participated in any of these initiatives in the last two years?</p>	<p>Institutional pressure campaigns – 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flashmob - 3</li> <li>• Awareness campaigns on social networks - 7</li> <li>• Petition - 5</li> <li>• Square demonstrations, marches, sit-in - 5</li> <li>• None of these - 5</li> </ul>	
<p>Q7. What was the cause? (In answer to Q6)</p>	<p>The main reasons for youth participating in civic events are as follows: the corruption, the illegal deforestation and the environment, transport and highways, education, bullying and human persons trafficking, minorities rights.</p>	
<p>Q8. Do you think that technology could play a role in promoting social inclusion and equal participation? If yes, how? If not, why not?</p>	<p>Technology allows better spread of information, organizing events, processing of data.</p>	<p>Disadvantages are related to functional illiteracy - although technology is now widely available and accessible, many don't understand what the information they are</p>



<p>Q9. Are you aware of game-based learning initiatives? If so, could you name these? what do you think?</p>	<p>13 of 30 participants answered they are not aware of game based learning initiatives.</p> <p>2 learning initiatives mentioned are Beaconing and Izibac.</p> <p>Participants acknowledge that learning through play is more effective but methods need to be applied professionally in order to be effective.</p>	
<p>Q10. Do you know of any initiatives on young people’s civic engagement you consider ‘best practices’? If yes, name them.</p>	<p>22 participants mentioned the programs and volunteering projects of different local NGOs</p>	<p>8 from 30 participants answered they do not know of any initiatives on young people’s civic engagement</p>
<p>Q11. How do you think Gamification could be used to enhance critical reflection on social and political circumstances of young adult?</p>	<p>Gamification could be used to enhance critical reflection on social and political circumstances of young adults if games would include aspects from real life games would include exercises or if games would reward good social behavior.</p>	<p>One person is against using the games for such purpose.</p>

<p>Q12. According to you what are the most successful activities and practices for fostering civic participation, social inclusion and gender equality among young people (i.e. diversitydays with games, workshops, exhibitions, theatre, round-tables/debates, competitions on drawings,</p>	<p>workshops and debates, contests (foto contests especially), festivals, artistic events that require active involvement, round table discussions.</p>	
<p>Q13. Do you have additional notes or suggestions that you think could be useful for our research?</p>	<p>- to consult the target group before implementing Gamification projects - taking over elements of games and integrating them into organizational training and follow-up processes.</p>	



Gaming for Social Inclusion and Civic Participation