

# Escape Games for Entrepreneurship Report





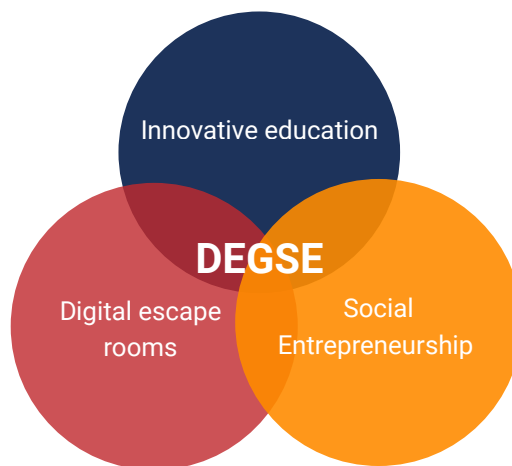
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## Introduction

As the demand for innovative educational tools grows, digital escape rooms offer a compelling approach to engage youth in entrepreneurship education and social innovation. The Escape Games for Entrepreneurship Report investigates how these interactive, gamified experiences can empower young people to develop entrepreneurial skills and address real-world societal challenges.



The purpose of this report is to develop a comprehensive theoretical and practical framework illustrating how digital escape rooms can enhance entrepreneurial competencies, raise awareness of social entrepreneurship, and actively engage youth in learning. This ultimately contributes to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030 by fostering youth-driven social innovation. The key points that will be developed in this report include escape games as immersive, narrative-driven problem-solving activities; entrepreneurship education as equipping individuals with skills for innovation and creative thinking; and social entrepreneurship as focusing on sustainable solutions to societal issues.


This is achieved through a mixed methodology, incorporating an in-depth literature review of pedagogical theories, analysis of existing collaborative contributions from project partners. The report aims to serve as a vital resource for educators, policymakers, and youth organisations, promoting innovative strategies to advance entrepreneurship education globally.

## 2. Social Entrepreneurship and Pedagogical Foundations



### 2.1 Definitions, scope, and relevance of social entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship combines innovation, business skills, and a strong social mission. It is about creating solutions to real-life challenges, such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, or environmental issues. Unlike traditional businesses, social enterprises aim not just to make money, but to create a positive impact on society and the environment. Social entrepreneurs are people who take action when others see problems. They are changemakers who believe "doing good" and "doing business" can go hand in hand.



Why is it important for young people?



Young people today care deeply about social justice, sustainability, and the future of our planet.

Social entrepreneurship helps youth:

- Find purpose in what they do.
- Gain confidence to lead change.
- Learn skills they can use in work, activism, or life.

By engaging in social entrepreneurship, youth are not just learning, they are acting. They are building real solutions for their communities.

## 2.2 Social Innovation and Sustainability in Youth Education

Social innovation means new ways of addressing community challenges, especially when traditional systems fail. Youth are naturally creative. When they understand how innovation works, they come up with fresh, bold solutions.

In youth education, this matters because:

- It helps connect learning with real life.
- It empowers students to be active citizens.
- It brings values like empathy, collaboration, and responsibility into the classroom.



Sustainability ensures that the solutions we create today don't harm the world tomorrow. Teaching youth about sustainability is key to building resilient, future-ready leaders.

## 2.3 Pedagogical theories: experiential learning, constructivism, gamification



To make learning meaningful and impactful, we base our work on strong educational foundations:

- **Experiential Learning.** This theory says that we learn best by doing. In our activities, youth are not passive, they are active participants. They try, fail, learn, reflect, and try again. Escape games are a perfect tool for this.
- **Constructivism.** Learning happens when we build knowledge ourselves, not when it's given to us. Through challenges in the escape room, young people construct understanding through exploration and teamwork.
- **Gamification** adds game elements to learning. It makes education fun, dynamic, and motivating. Escape rooms use puzzles, time pressure, rewards, and storytelling to boost engagement and curiosity.

## 2.4 How social entrepreneurship connects with real-world problem-solving for youth

In an escape room focused on social entrepreneurship, players:



Face a problem (e.g., pollution, exclusion, poverty).



This kind of learning is transformational. It doesn't just teach theory. It gives young people the tools to take action to start something that matters.

Escape rooms become a space where imagination meets purpose where youth can dream and do.

In today's world, social entrepreneurship is not optional, it's essential. When we combine it with powerful pedagogical tools like experiential learning and gamification, we create exciting opportunities for young people.

Through digital escape rooms, we invite youth to step into the role of changemakers, to explore challenges, build solutions, and believe in their own power to shape a better future.



## 3. Youth Engagement through games

Youth are not only the leaders of tomorrow but the change-makers of today. Engaging them in entrepreneurship, particularly social innovation, demands more than traditional teaching methods: it requires creativity, immersion and relevance. Escape games, which offer collaborative, immersive puzzle-solving experiences, can provide unique pathways to build entrepreneurial mindsets, foster teamwork and connect youth with real-world issues. This chapter explores how escape games can strategically engage youth in social innovation, outlines some of the factors behind youth motivation and learning and addresses barriers that prevent deeper entrepreneurial involvement.

### 3.1 Strategies to involve youth in social innovation



Involving youth in social innovation through escape games involves thoughtful design, relevant themes and youth-centered delivery.



Here are several strategies that the DEGSE project will implement. Games must be grounded in issues that matter to youth: climate change, mental health, digital rights, social justice, etc. Escape games with missions to "stop a data breach threatening online privacy" or "solve a water crisis in a village" allow players to engage with social issues dynamically. This not only enhances immersion but positions youth as agents of change. Some other strategies worth considering:

**Co-creation with youth:** Youth involvement in the design process ensures ownership and relevance. When young people help design the storylines, puzzles and missions, they feel empowered and better connected to the entrepreneurial process behind social problem-solving.

**Gamifying real social innovation challenges:** Escape games can simulate entrepreneurship processes like ideation, prototyping, pitching and user empathy. For instance, a game could involve "unlocking" personas of stakeholders and "decoding" customer needs through puzzles. Embedding these mechanics turns passive learning into active engagement.

**Multiplayer collaboration for collective impact:** Youth thrive in peer networks. Multiplayer escape games that require diverse roles, such as planner, researcher, and communicator, promote teamwork and expose players to collaborative leadership, a vital skill in social entrepreneurship.

**Reflection and debriefing:** After each game session, guided reflection helps connect the game's content to real-world entrepreneurial actions. Youth discuss lessons learned, emotional reactions and how they might apply insights to actual community issues.

## 3.2 Understanding youth motivations and engagement in learning



To design effective escape games for entrepreneurship, educators and facilitators must understand what drives youth engagement. Consider the following:


- **Autonomy and ownership:** Young people crave autonomy in learning. Games provide this through open-ended problem-solving, self-directed pacing and opportunities to choose how to contribute to the team.
- **Relevance and real-world connection:** Engagement increases when youth see clear links between game content and their own lives or future goals. Escape games simulate real-world entrepreneurial challenges, making abstract concepts concrete and applicable.
- **Immediate feedback and achievement:** Games provide instant responses to actions. Correct answers lead to progress; mistakes offer learning moments. This feedback loop boosts motivation and reinforces learning without judgment.

- **Narrative and identity:** Youth engage more when they see themselves reflected in the game or can assume meaningful roles. Narrative-based games allow players to step into roles like "Social Innovator" or "Tech Start-up CEO," helping them explore and develop their entrepreneurial identities.
- **Emotional engagement and flow:** Games that strike a balance between challenge and skill foster "flow", a state of deep focus and enjoyment. Emotional highs and lows experienced during a game build resilience and mirror the entrepreneurial journey. (Architect, 2025)

When introducing escape games, preface the activity with a discussion on the real-world relevance of the scenario and close with a debriefing that helps students draw connections to their personal goals and community concerns.

### 3.3 Barriers to youth participation in entrepreneurship and how games can help





Despite increasing focus on youth entrepreneurship, many young people remain disconnected. Escape games can help address the following barriers.

- **Lack of confidence or self-efficacy:** Many youth don't see themselves as capable entrepreneurs. Escape games create low-risk environments where success is possible, boosting confidence. Solving puzzles and contributing to a team validates their abilities. It is a good idea to include puzzles that allow for multiple solutions and different skill sets, e.g., logic, creativity, communication so that all participants can shine.
- **Limited access to resources or mentorship:** Youth from underrepresented communities often lack access to entrepreneurial ecosystems. Escape games can simulate mentorship and access to tools (like business canvases or customer feedback) within a game environment.
- **Perceived irrelevance of entrepreneurship:** Entrepreneurship can feel abstract or inaccessible. When games tie entrepreneurial skills to meaningful, real-world missions (e.g., improving mental health services for teens), they show how entrepreneurship is a tool for impact.
- **Fear of failure:** Games normalize failure as part of the process. Puzzles not solved in time or incorrect guesses don't result in punishment: they spark group discussion, learning and retrying, fostering resilience.
- **Passive learning culture:** Traditional education often rewards compliance, not initiative. Escape games flip this model. They reward curiosity, risk-taking and innovation, which are core entrepreneurial traits.

Escape games are not just entertainment; they are transformative tools that can unlock youth potential, build entrepreneurial competencies and inspire social change. Educators and facilitators can turn disengaged learners into empowered innovators if they use games with understanding youth motivations and addressing systemic barriers through game mechanics.



## 4. Designing Escape Games for Entrepreneurial Learning

Escape games, also known as escape rooms, are immersive, team-based experiences in which players solve a series of puzzles and challenges within a set timeframe in order to "escape" from a themed scenario. These games are often built around narrative contexts, such as crime scenes, historical mysteries, or fictional crises, that require participants to use logic, communication, and collaboration to succeed. Originally conceived as physical, in-person games, the format has evolved to include digital, hybrid, and even outdoor versions. (Tzima et al., 2020).

According to Scott Nicholson, escape rooms represent a form of live-action team-based game "where players discover clues, solve puzzles, and accomplish tasks in one or more rooms in order to accomplish a specific goal" (2015, p. 1). Their success lies in the combination of problem-solving, time pressure, and engaging storytelling, making them especially appealing for educational and training purposes as well.

### 4.1 Advantage and Disadvantages of Escape Games in Educational and Entrepreneurial Learning

Escape games have gained recognition as innovative tools in both education and entrepreneurial training. Their ability to combine storytelling, collaboration, and real-time problem-solving makes them particularly engaging. However, while the benefits are promising, there are also practical limitations that educators and trainers must consider.



Advantages	Disadvantages
Boost engagement and motivation	Time- and resource-intensive to design and run
Promote soft skills like teamwork and critical thinking	Not suitable for all learning styles
Allow learning through failure in a safe environment	
Proven high impact on learning outcomes	
Encourage iterative thinking and experimentation	

## 4.2 Core Design Mechanics of Digital Escape Rooms: Narrative, Puzzle Structure, and Flow

The effectiveness of digital escape rooms lies in three essential design components: narrative, puzzle structure, and flow as described in the booklet “Designing educational escape rooms” produced within the Erasmus + project “School Break” (for more info visit: <http://www.school-break.eu/>). The narrative provides a meaningful context, guiding players through a story-driven experience that enhances motivation and emotional involvement. A coherent and immersive plot, such as a mystery or mission, connects the puzzles and gives purpose to the activity.

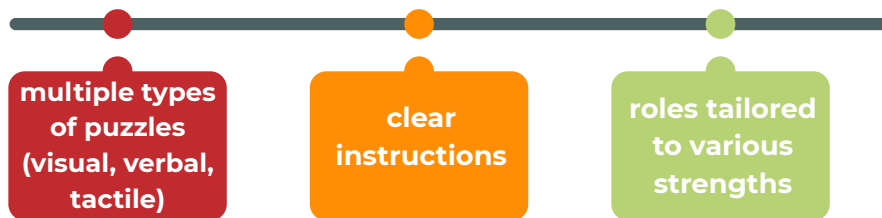
The puzzle structure serves as the learning engine in escape rooms; it is the driving force behind the educational process in an escape game. For instance, in an escape room, the arrangement of puzzles encourages players to think critically, adapt, and acquire new knowledge. Without this thoughtful puzzle design, the escape room would fail to provide the same enriching learning experience. Puzzles must align with educational goals, be varied in type, and calibrated in difficulty. Clear instructions and relevance to the storyline are crucial to avoid confusion or disengagement (School Break Handbook 4).



Finally, flow refers to the game's pacing and logical progression. A well-designed sequence of tasks, balanced time constraints, and smooth transitions help sustain attention and engagement (School Break Handbook 2). Together, these elements create an effective, immersive, and pedagogically sound escape room experience.

### 4.3 Designing for Diverse Learning Needs and Inclusive Participation

When designing educational escape rooms, inclusivity should be a core principle. Learners differ in cognitive styles, abilities, language skills, and prior knowledge. Effective escape rooms accommodate this diversity by offering:

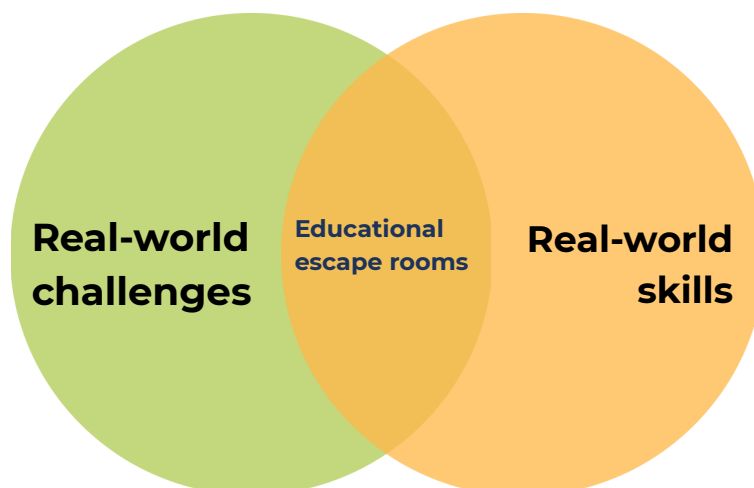


As highlighted in School Break Handbook 1, inclusive design also involves ensuring accessibility, both physical and digital, and creating a safe, collaborative environment where all participants can contribute meaningfully. Designers should avoid time pressure that creates stress, and instead support participation through adaptable formats, visual supports, and differentiated tasks.

To extend inclusivity beyond gameplay, debriefing sessions can also be structured to ensure that all voices are heard. Facilitators can use small-group reflections, written prompts, or turn-taking strategies to give space to quieter participants and ensure equitable participation. This inclusive approach to debriefing helps consolidate learning, foster empathy, and validate the contributions of every team member.

## 4.4 Integration of real-world social problems and impact scenarios

Educational escape rooms are most powerful when they address real-world issues, such as climate change, social justice, or digital privacy. Embedding these themes within game narratives not only enhances relevance but also encourages critical thinking, empathy, and active citizenship. According to School Break Handbook 5, scenarios rooted in real-life challenges help learners connect abstract concepts to tangible consequences, fostering deeper engagement and social awareness. This approach transforms escape rooms from pure problem-solving exercises into meaningful, impact-driven learning experiences.



## 4.5 Tools and Platforms Used

A wide range of digital tools can support the creation of educational escape rooms. Genially is often used to build interactive, web-based games with embedded multimedia and clickable puzzles. For fully digital or immersive experiences, platforms like Unity enable the development of 3D or virtual reality escape rooms. Tools like Mentimeter facilitate live interaction and reflection, while Google Forms or other survey tools can be used at the end of the activity to assess learning outcomes and engagement. The choice of platform depends on the learning objectives, technological resources, and level of interactivity desired.



## 5. Entrepreneurial Skills Developed Through Escape Games

Entrepreneurship education can do more than just provide theoretical knowledge. It can offer young people authentic, engaging experiences that help them build practical skills and mindsets. Digital educational escape rooms offer exactly that: structured, immersive challenges where learners develop entrepreneurial skills by solving problems, navigating group dynamics, making decisions, and reflecting on their actions in simulated but meaningful contexts.

The DEGSE project uses digital escape games to introduce and reinforce the full range of 15 key entrepreneurial competences defined by the ENTREComp Framework (European Commission, 2016), across its three domains: Ideas and Opportunities, Resources, and Into Action. These competences, listed in the table below, are not only essential for those planning to launch businesses or social enterprises but are also widely transferable to civic participation, digital work, and lifelong learning.



<b>Ideas and opportunities</b> 	Spotting opportunities
	Creativity
	Vision
	Valuing ideas
	Ethical and sustainable thinking
<b>Resources</b> 	Self-awareness and self-efficacy
	Motivation and perseverance
	Mobilizing resources
	Financial and economic literacy
	Mobilizing others
<b>Into action</b> 	Taking the initiative
	Planning and management
	Coping with uncertainty, ambiguity and risk
	Working with others
	Learn by doing

*The ENTREcomp model*



## 5.1 Ideas and Opportunities: Cultivating Vision and Purpose Through Play

Escape games naturally stimulate learners to engage with the first area of ENTREComp: the ability to generate, evaluate and develop ideas that create value for others. Players must actively scan their environment and think systemically to spot opportunities hidden within clues or narrative cues. This mirrors the real-world entrepreneurial process of identifying unmet needs in social, cultural, or economic contexts (Martina & Göksen, 2020). Escape games also foster creativity by encouraging players to combine resources, interpret puzzles from new angles, and experiment with non-linear thinking to solve problems.

Through role play and storytelling, escape games also invite learners to form a vision: imagining what a better outcome or future might look like within the constraints of the game. In this sense, they don't just develop abstract creativity but help players visualise future impact and begin working toward it. Simultaneously, learners build skills in valuing ideas by evaluating which ideas are feasible and which carry the most potential for success.

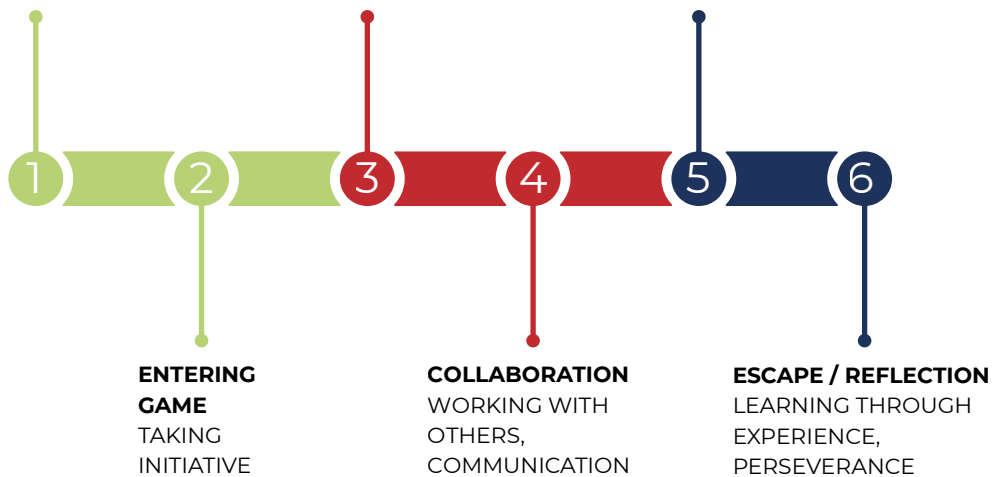
Finally, escape games often embed ethically charged decision-making into the narrative, inviting players to assess the ethical and sustainable implications of their choices. For instance, participants might be asked to weigh trade-offs between short-term success and long-term social good, developing a more responsible entrepreneurial mindset. Hartman-Caverly (2022) notes that these kinds of embedded ethical dilemmas make escape games particularly powerful tools for building reflective, sustainability-oriented thinking. From start to finish, escape games can help develop various skills, as illustrated in the flowchart below.



**BRIEFING**  
SELF-AWARENESS & VISION

**EXPLORING PUZZLES**  
SPOTTING OPPORTUNITIES, CREATIVITY

**DECISION POINTS**  
ETHICAL THINKING, COPING WITH UNCERTAINTY



## 5.2 Resources: Building Confidence, Resilience, and Practical Know-How

The second area of ENTREComp relates to the personal and external resources entrepreneurs need to transform ideas into action. Digital escape games offer a low-risk environment to develop these resources.

First, they help learners build self-awareness and self-efficacy. Players must quickly identify their strengths, assume their designated team roles, and evaluate their contributions under time pressure. Repeated experience within the game nurtures belief in their capacity to influence outcomes despite uncertainty, echoing the findings of Sowell (2020), who highlighted escape rooms' ability to foster perseverance and adaptive confidence.

Escape games are also ideally suited to developing motivation and perseverance. Time constraints, challenging puzzles, and unexpected twists motivate players to persevere, even when the path forward is unclear. Such resilience and determination to achieve team goals are essential to sustaining entrepreneurial projects over time.



In terms of practical resource management, escape games simulate the entrepreneurial task of mobilising resources. Participants must manage the limited information, time, and tools available to them, often under ambiguous conditions. By modelling scarcity and requiring creative resource use, escape games reflect real-world conditions where entrepreneurs must "do more with less." In many cases, the use of digital platforms in escape games also implicitly strengthens digital literacy as part of resource mobilisation.

Though escape rooms are not simulations of economic systems, they do offer indirect opportunities to support financial and economic literacy, especially when scenarios include budgeting, prioritising actions based on cost or value, or simulating social enterprise operations. In this way, games can introduce young people to the logic of sustainability in financial decision-making, even in fictionalised forms.

Escape games are inherently social experiences, requiring learners to engage in mobilising others. They must communicate clearly, persuade teammates, negotiate roles, and align efforts; skills that are foundational for leadership and team-based entrepreneurship. These activities echo what Sowell (2020) identifies as the key contributions of escape games to teamwork, communication, and collaboration in educational contexts.

### 5.3 Into Action: Turning Ideas into Impact Through Experience

The final ENTREComp domain focuses on the capacity to act on ideas and learn from that process. Escape games offer a controlled yet dynamic environment where players can test their plans, take initiative, manage risk, and reflect on their learning in real-time.

From the moment players enter a game, they are encouraged to take the initiative, to start solving without instruction, to assume leadership, and to take ownership of the challenge. This supports autonomy and a bias toward action, key components of entrepreneurial behaviour (Martina & Göksen, 2020).



To progress, teams must engage in planning and management, breaking down the escape challenge into smaller, manageable tasks. They often need to prioritise actions, assign roles, and make trade-offs based on evolving information. These planning skills are directly transferable to entrepreneurial contexts.

Given that most escape games include unexpected twists or incomplete information, players inevitably develop strategies for coping with uncertainty, ambiguity, and risk. They must make decisions when outcomes are unclear or rapidly shifting, learning how to test ideas, evaluate consequences, and adapt accordingly.

The collaborative nature of escape games also supports working with others. Learners must build trust, resolve disagreements, and coordinate action under pressure. This shared experience enhances interpersonal competence, builds networks, and fosters cooperation among individuals with diverse personalities and skill sets. Ultimately, escape games provide valuable opportunities for learning through experience, as illustrated in the infographic below.



Reflection is typically embedded in the gameplay and reinforced during debriefing sessions. Players are encouraged to assess their strategies, evaluate what worked (or didn't), and extract insights for future use. This metacognitive process enhances learning retention and builds a growth-oriented mindset, which is crucial for long-term success in entrepreneurship education (Hartman-Caverly, 2022).



Digital escape rooms can be much more than gamified activities: they are engaging, immersive, and pedagogically grounded tools for developing entrepreneurial competencies. By fostering creative thinking, teamwork, resilience, leadership, ethical reflection, and learning from action, these games provide young people with the tools to become proactive and capable changemakers.



## 6. Detailed Analysis of Escape Room Case Studies

The main objective of this chapter is to explore the growing application of escape rooms not only as a form of entertainment, but also as a highly effective educational and awareness-raising tool. Through the analysis of a series of case studies, we will delve into how these immersive experiences are being used to address a variety of critical issues, from cultural education and environmental awareness to the promotion of social entrepreneurship and inclusion. This section will serve as a country-by-country compilation of various initiatives, providing a detailed overview of their objectives, methodologies, results, and impacts. In the following pages, readers will find a comprehensive summary table that will allow for a quick understanding of the key characteristics of each case, followed by a more in-depth analysis that will highlight the innovations and lessons learned from each experience. The purpose is to offer a clear overview of the versatility and transformative potential of escape rooms in the educational and social spheres

### 6.1 Summary Table of Case Studies

Case Study Name	Country	Main Topic	Format & Method	Target Group	Positive/Relevant Aspect
<b>Garipalli Tourism Escape Rooms</b>	Italy	Urban cultural heritage education	Smartphone-guided city escape games combining riddles, QR codes, and storytelling.	Youth, families, school groups, and tourists interested in cultural heritage.	Combines education and fun, fostering curiosity and rediscovery of local identity sustainably.
<b>ECCI - Escape Climate Change Initiative</b>	Germany, France, Spain, Italy	Raising climate change awareness and system thinking	Blended methodology: analogue escape room and digital serious games	18 teachers and 18 non-teaching school staff, and approximately 855 secondary students.	Playful and emotionally engaging methods.



Case Study Name	Country	Main Topic	Format & Method	Target Group	Positive/Relevant Aspect
<b>Escape the Crisis</b>	Italy	Climate change awareness in secondary education	Physical escape room kit, handbook, and guidelines; two-day training for teachers.	15 secondary school teachers/trainers from Italy, Spain & Greece; indirectly ≈80 students.	Creates an emotional and interactive learning environment and equips teachers with scalable tools.
<b>Escape Social Exclusion: A digital escape game on accessibility and empathy</b>	Belgium	Accessibility and empathy towards people with disabilities.	Digital escape room with four levels simulating challenges for wheelchair users.	Teenagers aged 14-18, educators, and the general public.	Co-creation with people with disabilities resulted in a highly realistic, impactful tool.
<b>Aequalis Game: An escape game to explore gender inequalities</b>	Belgium	Civic engagement and gender equality education.	Printable, analogue escape game for up to 25 participants in groups, with puzzles and decoding tasks.	Young people aged 10+, educators, youth workers, schools, and civic organisations in French-speaking Belgium.	Multi-group format and free, ready-to-use toolkit make it easy to deploy in various educational settings.
<b>Armoedig: An escape game to show the challenges of escaping poverty</b>	Belgium	Civic engagement and poverty sensitisation.	Physical escape room simulating everyday challenges of poverty, followed by a debrief.	Youth, sport and leisure association leaders, trainers, and volunteers in Hasselt.	Co-creation with people in poverty made the experience authentic and impactful, fostering deep reflection and sustainable change.
<b>"A Social Economy" Game – MasterPeace Poland</b>	Poland	Youth social entrepreneurship; game-based learning for inclusion.	Board game teaching how to manage a social enterprise and stakeholder impact.	Young and long-term unemployed individuals in Silesia, Poland, especially those facing social exclusion.	Offer a low-risk environment for learning social business skills, combining coaching and emotional support.



Case Study Name	Country	Main Topic	Format & Method	Target Group	Positive/Relevant Aspect
<b>"Young Entrepreneurs – Play It Right" Game</b>	Poland (part of a multi-country Erasmus+ youth engagement project)	Youth social entrepreneurship education through game-based learning.	Digital card-based simulation with six stages guiding participants through the social venture lifecycle.	Young people aged 16-30 interested in social change and entrepreneurship; youth organisations, trainers, and teachers.	Low-risk, high-impact simulation that nurtures entrepreneurial mindsets and practical skills through play.
<b>VirtualReality Escape Room in Education (University of Library Studies &amp; IICTBAS)</b>	Bulgaria	Using VR-based gamified escape environments to foster learning, collaboration, and creative problem-solving.	Virtual reality game built as an escape room where learners navigate puzzles and tasks in a VR environment.	University students at the University of Library Studies in Sofia.	Shows how immersive digital escape-style environments can transform traditional learning into highly engaging, collaborative experiences.
<b>Youth Social EcoInnovation Lab (Social Innovators Bulgaria)</b>	Bulgaria	Youth-driven social and eco-innovation, combining entrepreneurship with civic and environmental awareness.	15 virtual collaborative workshops simulating innovation stages; use of online simulations to mimic "unlocking" flow.	Young people and youth workers across Europe, with specific involvement of Bulgarian youth.	It uses a gamified structure in online collaboration to engage youth in real-world entrepreneurial and civic challenges.
<b>BioXcape – Educational Escape Room on Biodiversity &amp; Climate Justice</b>	Bulgaria	Environmental awareness, climate change, biodiversity preservation, and climate justice.	Physical, on-site escape room experience lasting about 70 minutes with electronic puzzles and a scientific narrative.	Children (8+ with an adult), teens and adults (14+ autonomous), groups of up to 5 players.	First educational escape room in Bulgaria with a clear social mission: funding scientific research and raising environmental awareness.



Case Study Name	Country	Main Topic	Format & Method	Target Group	Positive/Relevant Aspect
<b>CHECK 2 - Create, Validate and Succeed</b>	Spain	Entrepreneurship, social innovation, prototype development, and social challenges.	Free and online escape room for teams, lasting 5 hours, with missions and challenges on the Proofhub platform.	Vocational Training (FP) students.	Its focus on solving specific social problems makes it an excellent tool for social entrepreneurship.
<b>Math Escape Challenge</b>	Spain	Entrepreneurship education, gamification.	Hybrid escape room with physical puzzles and digital clues on a custom platform.	Secondary students (14-15 years) and math teachers.	Mapping escape room principles to entrepreneurship education boosts autonomy and creative problem-solving, replicable in STEM.
<b>Escape Food 2050</b>	Spain	Sustainability, gamification, social issues.	Physical escape room at Fundesplai's Esplai Center, where participants solve puzzles about sustainable food choices.	Adults (15+), interested in sustainability and food systems, including groups with accessibility needs.	Combining sustainability with a science fiction narrative, offering a replicable model for environmental education.

## 6.2 Complete Compilation of Case Studies

### 6.2.1 Case Study: “Garipalli Tourism Escape Rooms”

**Country:** Italy

**Main Topic:** Urban cultural heritage education through outdoor escape games.



**Context:** Launched in 2021 by a young Italian team, Garipalli aims to make local culture and history engaging for youth and tourists through playful exploration. The initiative responds to overtourism and cultural disengagement by promoting lesser-known areas and stories via interactive outdoor escape games.

**Format & Method:** Garipalli designs smartphone-guided city escape games that blend riddles, QR codes, and storytelling. Players explore real neighbourhoods while solving puzzles tied to local history. The format combines game-based learning with geolocation and chatbot-driven narration.

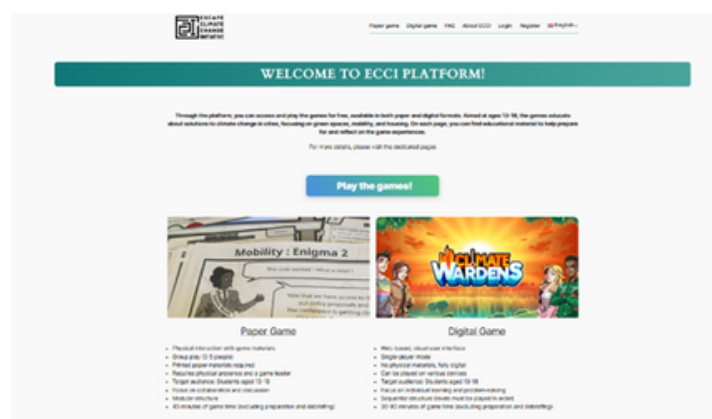
**Key Outcomes:** Over 35 escape itineraries created in various Italian cities. The games have attracted families, students, and tourists, revitalising cultural interest and decentralising tourist flows. Each experience promotes active learning, critical thinking, and place-based discovery.  
**Target Group:** Youth, families, school groups, and tourists interested in playful, interactive ways to engage with cultural heritage and explore cities off the beaten track.

**Positive Insight:** Garipalli proves that cultural tourism can be both educational and fun. By turning cities into escape rooms, it fosters curiosity and rediscovery of local identity in a sustainable, low-impact way.

## 6.2.2 Case Study: “ECCI - Escape Climate Change Initiative”

**Country:** Germany, France, Spain, Italy

**Main Topic:** Raising climate change awareness and system thinking via a hybrid escape-room/serious game tool for schools.



**Context:** Developed by a European consortium, ECCI responds to the limited presence of systems thinking and climate action in schools. Through an escape-room approach, the project empowers teachers and students to explore climate challenges and develop collective solutions in an engaging, problem-solving context.

**Format & Method:** ECCI uses a blended methodology: an analogue escape-room and a digital serious game (“Climate Wardens”), supported by a toolkit including teacher prep, gameplay, debriefing and action planning. The initiative spans 36 months of design, testing and roll-out in classrooms.

**Key Outcomes:** The project developed both physical and digital versions of an escape room focused on climate challenges. It produced an open-access educational toolkit, trained teachers and staff, and involved secondary school students in hands-on climate education through gameplay and co-design activities.

**Target Group:** 18 teachers and 18 non-teaching school staff from nine secondary schools in Germany, France, Spain and Italy; plus approximately 855 students who participated in the gameplay and co-design phases.

**Positive Insight:** By blending analogue and digital escape-room formats, ECCI shows that playful, emotionally engaging methods can foster real climate awareness and collective action in school communities.

### 6.2.3 Case Study: “Escape the Crisis”



**Country:** Italy

**Main Topic:** Climate change awareness in secondary education through an escape room methodology.

**Context:** The ESCAPE project equips secondary school and VET teachers with an engaging tool to raise awareness about climate change and the environmental impact of food consumption. Using the escape room game method, it introduces an emotional, non-formal dimension to classroom learning, easily replicable year after year.

**Format & Method:** Using non-formal education, ESCAPE delivered a toolkit comprising a physical escape room kit, handbook and guidelines. A two-day training immersed 15 teachers from Italy, Spain & Greece in climate science, sustainable food consumption and game facilitation, enabling them to replicate the escape game experience in their schools.

**Key Outcomes:** The project trained 15 teachers from 7 schools, providing them with a physical escape-room kit and a replicable toolkit. Over 80 students participated in the activities, enhancing climate awareness and strengthening teachers' skills in active, climate-focused pedagogy.

**Target Group:** 15 secondary school teachers/trainers from Italy, Spain & Greece. Indirectly: ≈80 students who experienced the escape room and other teachers reached through toolkit dissemination.

**Positive Insight:** By combining non-formal game-based methodology with climate education, ESCAPE created an emotional and interactive learning environment. This approach helps teachers inspire behavioral behavioural change and equips them with scalable tools to embed sustainability in curricula.

### 6.2.4 Case Study: Escape Social Exclusion: A digital escape game on accessibility and empathy

**Country:** Belgium

**Main topic:** Created by occupational therapy students at AP Hogeschool for Handicap International, this game addresses the social exclusion of people with disabilities by simulating real-life access barriers in public spaces like schools and stations.



**Context:** Created by occupational therapy students (Jesse Huyghe, Zuzanna Biziel, Ines Rufo, Arianne Mateos, Ali Ndonje) at AP Hogeschool for Handicap International, this game addresses the social exclusion of people with disabilities by simulating real-life access barriers in public spaces like schools and stations. The bachelor's paper that describes the project has been nominated for the “Futureproof award 2025” (Future-proof award) of the Flemish community in Belgium.

**Format & Method:** A digital escape room with four levels simulating challenges for wheelchair users. Players must navigate inaccessible environments, building empathy and awareness through problem-solving and experiential learning.

**Key Outcomes:** The game was tested with youth and international students, including during the EACD+ Festival in Bruges, an international sports festival for children with disabilities. The feedback they received was overwhelmingly positive; the children appreciated seeing their disabilities represented in the game and how it could help others understand their experiences.

**Target group:** Teenagers aged 14–18, educators, and the general public. Designed for use in schools, events, and awareness campaigns. Positive insight: Involving people with disabilities in design led to a highly realistic, impactful tool. Co-creation enhanced authenticity and relevance.


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### 6.2.5 Case Study: Aequalis Game: An escape game to explore gender inequalities

**Country:** Belgium

**Main topic:** Civic engagement and gender equality education.





**Context:** Created by the Province of Liège and Infor-Femmes, Aequalis Game raises awareness of gender inequalities through 12 playful challenges. It targets young audiences and was designed as an engaging, accessible tool for schools and youth organisations.

**Format & Method:** A printable, analogue escape game for up to 25 participants, split into 5 small groups (2-5 players per group). It uses puzzles, riddles and decoding tasks to explore gender inequality across six social domains (sports & leisure; careers & educational guidance; literature & games; families & roles; recreation & public spaces; advertising & media). A debrief and theoretical toolkit guide follow-up discussion.

**Key Outcomes:** The game stimulates critical thinking and discussion on gender roles. Educators report strong engagement from youth and say the flexible format supports inclusion in schools, workshops and civic education. Free resources make it widely accessible.

Target group: Young people aged 10+, educators, youth workers, schools and civic organisations across French-speaking Belgium.

**Positive insight:** Its multi-group format and free, ready-to-use toolkit make it easy to deploy in varied educational settings, fostering active learning on equality.

### 6.2.6 Case Study: Armoedig: An escape game to show the challenges of escaping poverty

**Country:** Belgium

**Main topic:** Civic engagement and poverty sensitisation





**Context:** 1 out of 7 people in the Limburg province of Belgium live in poverty. To raise awareness about it, Avansa Limburg, a socio-cultural organisation, and the city of Hasselt created an escape room highlighting the real-life barriers people in poverty face daily. It was co-designed with people who have lived in poverty. The goal is to foster understanding and reduce exclusion in leisure and community life.

**Format & Method:** A physical escape room simulates everyday challenges of poverty. Small groups (3–6 people) participate, followed by a debrief. Associations can also follow a 4-session coaching path to identify internal barriers and create concrete accessibility plans.

**Key Outcomes:** Participants report increased awareness of structural poverty and their role in reducing exclusion. Many organisations commit to lowering access barriers. The co-creation approach has been praised for authenticity and lasting impact on civic practices. The project led to action plans for inclusion and increased empathy among organisations working with vulnerable groups.

**Target group:** Youth, sport and leisure association leaders, trainers, and volunteers in Hasselt, with options for schools, companies and local governments.

**Positive insight:** Co-creation with people in poverty made the experience authentic and impactful, fostering deep reflection and sustainable change.

### 6.2.7 Case Study: “A Social Economy” Game – MasterPeace Poland



**Country:** Poland

**Main Topic:** Youth social entrepreneurship; game-based learning for inclusion



**Context:** Poland faces long-term unemployment and social exclusion among various groups, including youth and marginalized communities. MasterPeace Poland focuses on fostering social entrepreneurship mindsets to drive sustainable change and inclusion.

**Format & Method:** As part of its “Tackling Long-term Unemployment” initiative, MasterPeace Poland developed “A Social Economy” board game. Through interactive gameplay, participants learn how to manage a social enterprise, emphasizing values like inclusion, stakeholder impact, and balancing social and financial goals.

**Key Outcomes:**

- Awareness & Mindset: The game fosters understanding of social enterprise values, management choices and inclusive business principles.
- Empowerment: Participants report increased self-confidence and readiness to create or join social ventures.
- Reaching unemployed youth: Over 100 individuals have completed the program through the game-integrated training framework.

**Target Group:** Young and long-term unemployed individuals in Silesia, Poland, especially those facing social exclusion and economic hardship.

**Positive Insight:** Game-based simulations offer a low-risk, engaging environment for learning social business skills. Combined with coaching and emotional support, the method builds both an entrepreneurial mindset and practical readiness.

## 6.2.8 Case Study: “Young Entrepreneurs – Play It Right” Game

**Country:** Poland (part of a multi-country Erasmus+ youth engagement project)

**Main Topic:** Youth social entrepreneurship education through game-based learning



**Context:** Youth in Poland often lack experiential training in social entrepreneurship, struggling to transfer theory to practice. Educational ecosystems call for engaging tools that develop social-enterprise competencies, from ideation to implementation, in a safe, supportive environment.

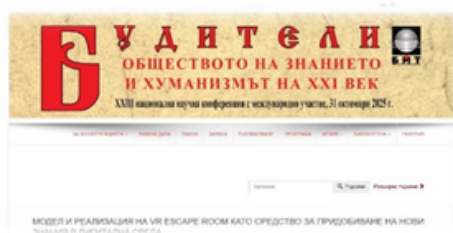
**Format & Method:** This digital card-based simulation is targeted toward young social entrepreneurs. The game consists of six interrelated stages, guiding participants through the lifecycle of a social venture - from problem identification to planning and implementation. It takes approximately 30 minutes to complete.

### Key Outcomes:

- Competency development: Participants report improved understanding of problem-solving, stakeholder engagement and venture planning.
- Engagement: High levels of motivation and active participation observed during gameplay.
- Transferability: The game is freely available and already being used by youth trainers and NGOs across Poland and in partner countries.
- Target Group: Young people aged 16–30 interested in social change and entrepreneurship; Youth organisations, trainers, teachers and educators running social innovation workshops

**Positive Insight:** Offers a low-risk, high-impact simulation that nurtures entrepreneurial mindsets and practical skills through play. Its structured yet exploratory design allows youth to trial ideas, experience decision-making, and learn collaboration.

### 6.2.9 Case Study: Virtual-Reality Escape Room in Education (University of Library Studies & IICT-BAS)



**Country:** Poland (part of a multi-country Erasmus+ youth engagement project)

**Main Topic:** Youth social entrepreneurship education through game-based learning

**Context:** Presented at MIPRO 2023 by researchers at the University of Library Studies and Information Technologies and IICT-BAS in Sofia, this project aimed to explore the benefits of gamified learning using virtual reality escape-room scenarios in higher education contexts.

**Format and method:** A virtual-reality game built as an escape room: learners navigate puzzles and tasks in a VR environment. Designed using gamification principles to actively engage students beyond passive lecture-style learning.

#### Key outcomes:

- Higher levels of student motivation and engagement.
- Improved active learning and collaboration during gameplay,— students worked together to solve challenges.
- Demonstrated that interactive VR environments can boost creativity and deeper conceptual understanding.

**Target group:** University students at the University of Library Studies in Sofia, particularly those studying technology or education-related disciplines.

**Positive Insight:** This case shows how immersive digital escape-style environments can transform traditional learning into highly engaging, collaborative experiences, reinforcing entrepreneurial mindsets like creativity, resourcefulness, and team problem-solving.

### 6.2.10 Case Study: Youth Social Eco-Innovation Lab (Social Innovators Bulgaria)

(While not strictly an escape room, this project features gamified workshop modules heavily inspired by idea-to-reality simulations, collaborative puzzle-style ideation, and youth-led innovation through online platforms.)

**Country:** Bulgaria

**Main topic:** Youth-driven social and eco-innovation, combining entrepreneurship with civic and environmental awareness.



**Context:** Implemented by Social Innovators Bulgaria as part of an Erasmus+ KA2 initiative. Its goal is to support young Europeans in co-creating social innovation ideas in an online collaborative “innovation lab” environment (socialinnovators.space).

#### **Format and method:**

- 15 virtual collaborative workshops simulating stages of innovation: problem identification, ideation, prototyping, peer feedback, and pitching.
- Use of online simulations and interactive platforms to mimic game-like flow of “unlocking” the next stage, similar to puzzle progression in escape games.

### Key outcomes:

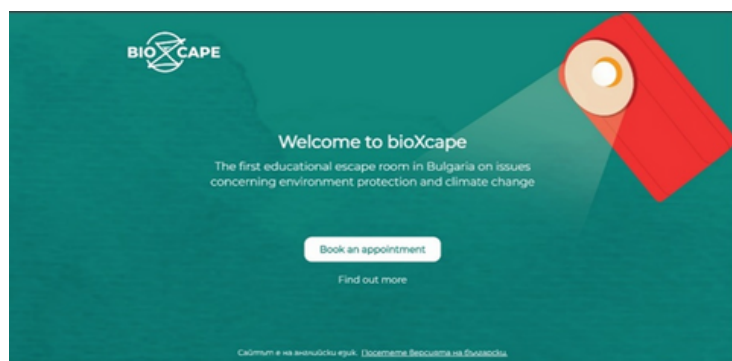
- Three pilot social/eco-innovation project ideas generated by youth teams.
- Professional training for youth workers on facilitating active citizenship, initiative, and entrepreneurship.
- Local multiplier events sharing results nationally in six languages.
- Target group: Young people and youth workers across Europe, with a specific involvement of Bulgarian youth.

**Positive or relevant aspect:** Although not a traditional escape game, this format uses gamified structure in online collaboration to engage youth in real-world entrepreneurial and civic challenges, —encouraging ownership, creativity, and teamwork.

### 6.2.11 Case Study: BioXcape – Educational Escape Room on Biodiversity & Climate Justice

**Country:** Bulgaria

**Main topic:** Environmental awareness, climate change, biodiversity preservation and climate justice.



**Context:** Created by the National Museum of Natural History at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation, and Mist Engineering, with support from the EU-funded DEAR (Development Education and Awareness Raising) programme. Located in the subterranean level of the National Museum of Natural History in Sofia.



### **Format and method:**

- A physical, on-site escape room experience lasting about 70 minutes, using electronic puzzles that unlock sequential challenges only when solved correctly.
- Embedded scientific narrative: players step into the fictional shoes of Dr Irma Zhelyazkova, continuing her climate research by solving logic and communication puzzles based on real environmental data.
- Designed for mixed-age teams (children from 8+ with adults; independent play from 14+), with a human operator monitoring progress and ensuring immersion and safety.

### **Key outcomes:**

- Highly engaging, science-based experience found to deepen understanding of climate justice and biodiversity conservation.
- Participants develop critical thinking, logical reasoning, and teamwork, while being immersed in factual environmental content.
- Proceeds from player fees are reinvested into scientific and conservation activities of the Museum and the Biodiversity Foundation, — making it a self-sustaining educational tool.

**Target Group:** Children (8+ with an adult), teens and adults (14+ autonomous), groups of up to 5 players, — includes school groups, families, youth groups, and education-focused visitors.

**Positive / Relevant Aspect:** BioXcape stands out as the first educational escape room in Bulgaria with a clear social mission: to fund scientific research while raising awareness about environmental issues. It merges edutainment with impact, fosters science engagement among youth, and builds transferable skills through game-play. A strong model for integrating social-purpose entrepreneurship and educational gaming.

## 6.2.12 Case Study: CHECK 2 - Create, Validate and Succeed

**Country:** Spain

**Main Topic:** Entrepreneurship, social innovation, prototype development, social challenges



**Context:** Promoted by CaixaBank Dualiza and FP Innovación, it aims to reinforce classroom knowledge for Vocational Training (FP) students, mobilise their talent, and instil an entrepreneurial spirit by familiarising them with current business and social realities and challenges.

**Format & Method:** This is a 100% free and online escape room designed for teams. It lasts 5 hours, during which participants complete missions and challenges on the Proofhub platform. Teams receive "training micro-pills" and additional clues to help them progress.

**Key Outcomes:** Develops entrepreneurial skills, decision-making, creativity, collaborative learning, and the ability to transform a business prototype into a disruptive and innovative one. It challenges participants to ideate products/services that address social challenges.

**Target Group :** Vocational Training (FP) students.

**Positive Insight:** Its focus on solving specific social problems makes it an excellent tool for social entrepreneurship. The digital format, accessibility, and training support make it a very complete and scalable educational experience.

### 6.2.13 Case Study: Math Escape Challenge

**Country:** Spain

**Main Topic:** Entrepreneurship education, gamification



**Context:** Implemented in Ceuta for 3rd-year secondary students, this escape room uses gamified challenges to boost math engagement and develop entrepreneurial skills like problem-solving and autonomy.

**Format & Method:** A hybrid escape room used both physical puzzles and digital clues on a custom platform. Students solved math problems within 45 minutes to escape a locked scenario, fostering teamwork and entrepreneurial skills such as decision-making and creativity.

**Key Outcomes:** 62 students participated; the experimental group achieved 25% higher math scores and showed improved motivation and autonomy.

**Target Group :** Secondary students (14–15 years) and math teachers aiming to foster entrepreneurial skills through active learning.

**Positive Insight :** Mapping escape room principles to entrepreneurship education boosts autonomy and creative problem-solving, replicable in STEM to develop proactive, innovative thinkers across educational levels.

## 6.2.14 Case Study: Escape Food 2050

**Country:** Spain

**Main Topic:** Sustainability, gamification, social issues



**Context:** Developed by Fundesplai in El Prat de Llobregat, Escape Food 2050 promotes sustainable food systems. It addresses the environmental impact of food choices, targeting adults to foster awareness and responsible consumption through a gamified experience linked to the “Eat, Act, Impact” exhibition.

**Format & Method:** This is a physical escape room at Fundesplai’s Esplai Center where participants solve puzzles about sustainable food choices in a futuristic supermarket setting. The game is accessible for one person with reduced mobility per group.

**Key Outcomes:** This educational escape room achieved a nomination for best original escape room in 2022. It successfully taught participants about sustainable food consumption and developed their problem-solving and teamwork skills.

**Target Group :** Adults (15+), interested in sustainability and food systems, including groups with accessibility needs.

**Positive Insight :** Combining sustainability with a science fiction narrative in an escape room makes learning engaging and accessible, offering a replicable model for environmental education.



## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Escape Games for Entrepreneurship report demonstrates that digital escape games represent a highly effective and innovative approach to engaging young people in social entrepreneurship and innovation education. By merging gamification with experiential learning, these tools create dynamic and interactive environments that capture learners' interest and enhance their motivation. The study confirms that, by immersing participants in real-world problem-solving scenarios, digital escape games outperform passive learning methods and promote deeper understanding and retention.

Through teamwork and creative collaboration, young people develop essential entrepreneurial competencies such as critical thinking, adaptability, resilience, and communication. Furthermore, the safe, low-risk environment of the games encourages participants to take initiative, experiment with ideas, and overcome the fear of failure—making entrepreneurship more inclusive and accessible to all. By tackling relevant social issues such as climate change, sustainability, and social inclusion, these games not only foster skills but also nurture a sense of purpose and responsibility among participants, inspiring them to act as proactive changemakers in their communities.

Importantly, the outcomes of the report align closely with the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy and Erasmus+ priorities, which promote active citizenship, social innovation, and youth empowerment across Europe. In this sense, digital escape games serve not only as pedagogical tools but also as meaningful instruments for advancing European policy goals related to education, inclusion, and sustainable development.



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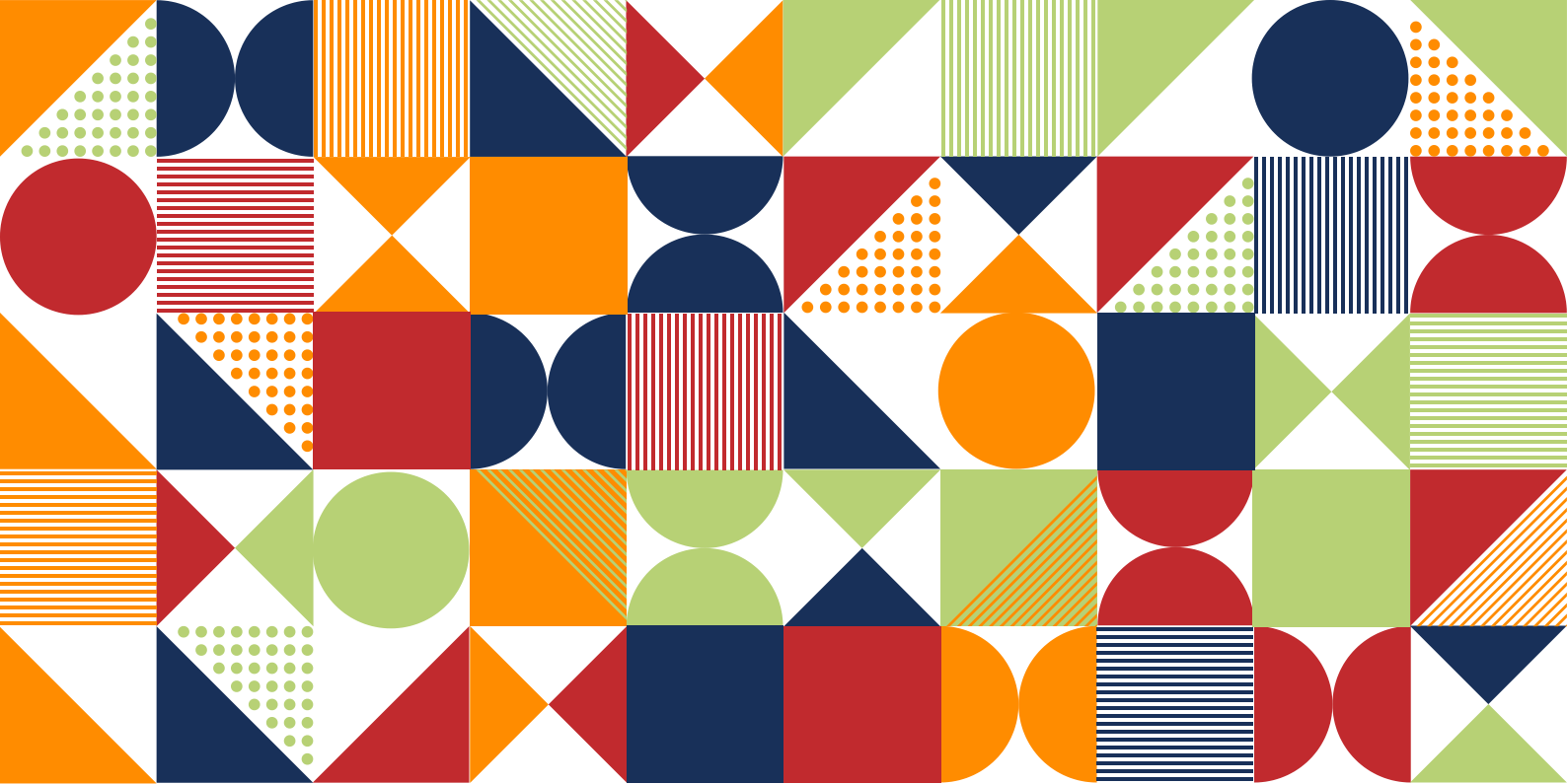
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