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UpGameIn

INCLUSIVITY
GUIDEBOOK

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Introduction

The definition of inclusivity, according to the Oxford English Dictionary is: "the practice or policy of not excluding any person on the grounds of race, gender, religion, age..."[1]. This definition focuses on the concept of ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their identity, background, or skills, are given equal opportunities for representation in all kinds of contexts and fields, such as in communities, workplaces, and, in this case, in games.

Inclusivity in games is about building a welcoming space where every player, no matter their background, abilities, or identity[2], feels represented. In practical terms, inclusivity in games means designing games that are playable and enjoyable by everyone. The aim is creating more and more games experiences that reflect the broad spectrum of humanity, and in order to do that the creation of the game mechanics, storylines, and characters, is evolving to ensure that everyone, from beginners to more experienced gamers, can have fun[3].

Furthermore, players are from all over the world, and have different cultural and personal perspectives and experiences, which should be respected and represented in games, as it is also a wonderful and effective way to promote respect and the celebration of cultural diversity.

Developing an inclusive game environment is the key to the growth and enrichment of the games community where the gamers feel recognized and appreciated, achieving the creation of better stories, more intensity and inventiveness in the games, stronger, and more collaborative community[4].

1. Oxford English Dictionary. (2023). Inclusivity. https://www.oed.com/dictionary/inclusivity_n?tl=true
2. AbleGamers. (2023). The importance of accessibility in games. https://www.ablegamers.org
3. International Game Developers Association. (2021). Inclusive game design and development.https://igda-website.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/08124833/Inclusive-Game-Design-and-Development.pdf
4. Ibid International Game Developers Association. (2021).

↘ Importance of Inclusivity in games

Games which include and address inclusivity issues are not only beneficial for the game industry but also benefits players and society in several ways.

First, games are a useful medium for storytelling and expression, with more potential to reflect diverse realities and promote inclusivity, challenging stereotypes and broadening players' understanding of the world[5]. Moreover, games can be a source of empathy and learning to understand skills, by letting the players experience situations that they might not face in real life. Through inclusive game design, players could take on the roles of characters with different backgrounds, abilities, or identities, thus fostering empathy, breaking down prejudices and misconceptions, and developing positive social interactions, as well as supportive communities[6]. Games are not simply entertainment, but also tools to contribute to the shifting of social norms and attitudes, so covering relevant themes and incorporating inclusivity and diversity while creating games, the industry could potentially contribute to changing stereotypes, raising awareness of social problems, and end up with good social transformation, encouraging debates on vital topics, and bringing out important dialogues in communities and families[7].

Furthermore, inclusivity in games potentially creates better market opportunities, expanding the audience, allowing wider and more varied groups to enjoy games.

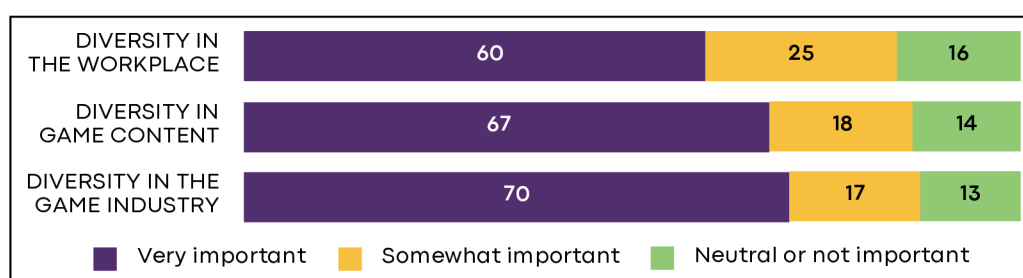5. Anastasopoulos, E., & Papadopoulos, A. (2019). Game design as a platform for social change. In Games and social media: The new frontier of human interaction (pp. 181–196). Springer.
6. Cook, L., & Makar, E. (2021). Disability and digital games: Understanding the needs of gamers with disabilities. In Games and human behavior: games as a tool for change (pp. 44–57). Routledge.
7. Ibid Anastasopoulos, E., & Papadopoulos, A. (2019).

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The games niche, once being focused mostly on male players in their teenage years, is now changing into a broader public, including the senior population, women, people of different races, and individuals with disabilities[8]. Such games that use inclusive design methods enrich their player base with the players representing different backgrounds, which enlarges the engagement and increases the marketability. This increased awareness of the necessity of inclusion in games can lead also to the growth of long-term economic prosperity and benefits, as the developers, aiming to diverse audiences, will open the industry to new markets, and will raise the possibility of game sales[9]. At the same time, it is more common for games created to serve a wider spectrum of players to receive positive reviews, recommendations, and the loyalty of fans, which guarantees both, indie developers and the main games companies, to achieve success[10].

In addition, it is acknowledged that inclusion also plays a role in improving the games industry's reputation overall, as a result of it changing past conceptions of the games industry and thus, bringing a more attractive brand, better public image, and more fair playing culture into it[11].

	Very important	Somewhat important	Neutral or not important
DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE	60	25	16
DIVERSITY IN GAME CONTENT	67	18	14
DIVERSITY IN THE GAME INDUSTRY	70	17	13

Source: IGDA DSS 2023

8. Ibid International Game Developers Association. (2021).

9. SpecialEffect. (2021). The future of accessible games: What's next in games accessibility? https://www.specialeffect.org.uk

10. Ibid International Game Developers Association. (2021).

11. The Guardian. (2020). Not so white, male and straight: the video games industry is changing. https://www.theguardian.com/games/2020/feb/19/video-games-industry-diversity-women-people-of-colour

Underrepresented Groups in Games

The picture that many people imagine when they think of a typical gamer is that of a young white guy, sitting in a games chair with big headphones on his head. However, this image doesn't reflect the reality of players today. Currently, 3.2 billion people identify as gamers, all with different backgrounds, for example, players of color make up 29% of the respondents, and 46% are female. Although those are the players who are making possible the growth of the games industry, they are still underrepresented in narratives and the development phases [12].

Inclusive game design and development can not only promote the sometimes neglected diversity of players, but also make the game stand out in an environment of increasingly competing markets, fostering a strong fanbase and improving both public perception and the experience of the players [13].

The different experiences and views, and the inclusion of diverse characters and contexts, make the games deeper, new, exciting, and, at times, more relatable. To take into account diversity in game design, we must consider that it encompasses many dimensions including race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ability, neurodiversity, socioeconomic status, etc.

Besides that, intersections of identity, commonly known as intersectionality, bring insight into understanding diversity in the games industry. To design games that really cover human

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12. Ibid International Game Developers Association. (2021).
13. Video Games Europe. (n.d.). Our diversity pledges. https://www.videogameseurope.eu/games-in-society/our-diversity-pledges/

identity it is also important to recognize that some people can be often confronted with several ways of possible social marginalization at the same time, like for example being a woman of color with a disability or a queer person from a low-income background simultaneously. For this reason, taking intersectionality into account the industry can forge a valuable relationship with both players who contribute to the game creation, and those who later become players, all over the world[14].

14. University of Silicon Valley. (2024). The importance of diversity and inclusion in games. https://usv.edu/blog/the-importance-of-diversity-and-inclusion-in-games/#:~:text=An%20incl

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↘ Women and gender representation

Women are a huge part of the games society, as in Italy, for example, they account for 44% of the whole, nevertheless, the historical perceptions of the sector is to be mostly dominated by men as, in the past, the majority of the products have been designed and market campaigns have been aimed at male customers, consequently reinforcing gender stereotypes [15]. Even so, the increasing number of women gamers are the occasion to possibly change the market and the industry's image [16].

Female characters have been commonly pictured in sexualized ways, and usually portraying side roles like sidekicks or damsels in need of a hero, which fuels the phenomenon of the disproportionate portrayal and underrepresentation of women in the industry. The article "Evidence of Ambivalent Sexism in Female Video Game Character Designs" is one of the examples of the studies that have been carried out about the topic, and in this case, taking into account 398 games developed in Japan and in the United states, between 1983 and 2017, the research confirmed the existence of sexism in the portrayals of the characters [17]. Although there have been advances in the last few years through the introduction of more complicated and realistically built female protagonists, still women's involvement is low, limited, and many times their portrayal is under the influence of stereotypes.

Individuals from the LGBTQ+ community, as well as non-binary individuals, are rarely represented, or presented in

15. GamesRadar. (2021). How games are evolving to better represent women and minorities. https://www.gamesradar.com

16. Ibid International Game Developers Association. (2021).

17. Lynch, T., Tompkins, J. E., Gilbert, M., & Burridge, S. (2024). Evidence of Ambivalent Sexism in Female Video Game Character Designs. Mass Communication and Society, 27(6), 1529–1554. https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2024.2311229

stereotypical ways, but thankfully, the focus and momentum that diversity is gaining is paving the way for better representation of the community and its individuals[18].

On the development side, diversity among game creators plays a very important role in representation in games. Nevertheless, the industry is suffering from lack of inclusiveness, and from important underrepresentation, caused mainly by discrimination, gender bias and the lack of role models, which might be the causes of the gender gap in the industry, and the reason why that the problem of stereotypical character representation in games is addressed so slowly. Women are the minority staff in development studios, representing 14% in France and 30% in North America and Europe according to data[19]. Non-binary and transgender people are also underrepresented in the sector, even though their presence in the sector is higher than that found in the general population[20]. Yet, they have a central role in creating diversified stories and characters in video games.

To improve the situation, it is really important to invest in education and training, involving more women and minorities in the game production process[21]. Also, the industry must integrate different stories, including diverse characters, breaking with stereotypes and the conventional narrative, and promoting a more realistic and inclusive one. Furthermore, companies should establish inclusive policies and ensure that there are equal career opportunities, while encouraging independent titles too, that are often more daring in dealing with thematically inclusive topics.
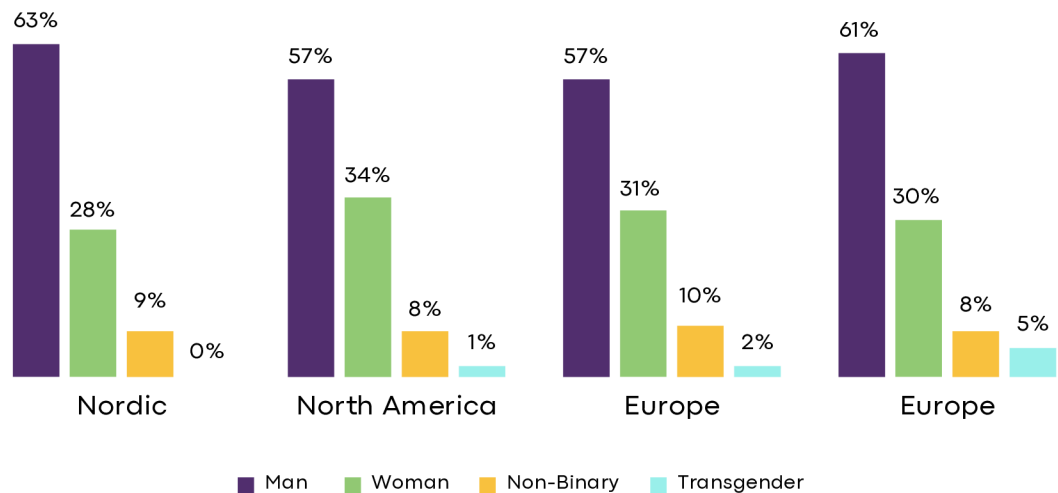
18. Geek Queer. (2024). Nei videogiochi i contenuti LGBTQIA+ sono meno del 2%.
https://www.geekqueer.com/2024/08/nei-videogiochi-i-contenuti-lgbtqia-sono-meno-del-2
19. Ibid International Game Developers Association. (2021).
20. Ibidem
21. Women in Games. (2023). Building a fair playing field. https://www.womeningames.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Building-a-Fair-Playing-Field-2.pdf

Chart data:

	Man	Woman	Non-Binary	Transgender
Nordic	63%	28%	9%	0%
North America	57%	34%	8%	1%
Europe	57%	31%	10%	2%
Europe	61%	30%	8%	5%

↘ Racial and ethnic minorities

The topic of minority representation in games includes the diversity of the game content and the composition of the development teams. This topic, although getting progressively more attention, is still marked by severe inequalities and slow progress.

In video games, for example, it's usually stereotypical the representation of people of color or from minority ethnic groups. Even though, in recent years, some games have made efforts to include more cultural diversity, the problem is still there, with the old white male prototype of a superhero taking the lead[22]. Such an aesthetic approach hardly represents the culturally diverse global games audience and also becomes a constraint on the story development of games. Many of the attempts at more inclusive representation are just minor contributions or superficial displays, as secondary roles, that do not even touch the complexities of different cultures and identities. The limited diversity of main characters also has an impact on players, as they have a hard time relating to or identifying with the characters and the stories they are playing.

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22. Ibid The Guardian (2020)

As seen from the developers, the industry bears more inequities. There is an obvious lack of racial diversity among the creative and leadership roles in the video game industry. In the UK, for example, the BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) group represents only 10% of the workforce. In the case of the United States of America, where the games audience is mostly composed of Latinx, Black and Asian players, development teams are still predominantly white, with only 10% of developers identifying themselves as Hispanic or Latino, and a smaller percentage as other minorities[23].

These differences really stand out when you put them side by side with the demographic variety of gamers themselves. For instance, in the U.S., the games community is mainly composed of Latinx, Black, and Asian populations, while on the other hand, major development teams are mostly homogenous. The discussions and implementation of corporations' Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) practices are increasing, but have still not transformed the ethnic composition of the sector[24].
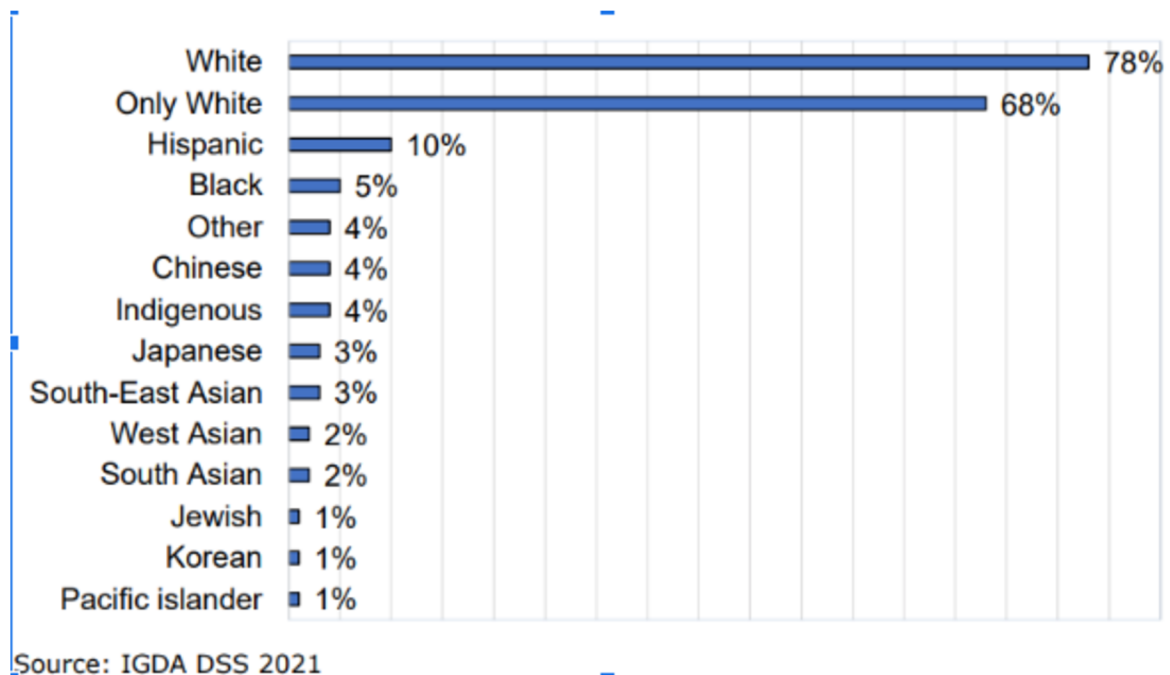
Regarding games content, the industry has increased the representation of minority groups, but it is behind compared to other creative industries, like for example film. Though some games have displayed increased cultural sensitivity, it is a rare species in an industry that is mostly run on a monocultural perspective[25]. To bring about a significant change it must be generated at the core of the industry, that is by the creation of more diverse development teams. More

23. Ibid International Game Developers Association. (2021).
24. Tech4gamers (2023). Over 95% of players don't consider inclusivity important in games. https://tech4gamers.com/players-on-inclusivity-in-games/
25. Council of Europe. (n.d.). Alternative narratives and inclusive communication. https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/alternative-narratives-and-inclusive-communication

creative collaboration through inclusivity in the process will not only widen the scope of stories and characters but also produce more realistic depictions of the universal human experience.

Category	Percentage
White	78%
Only White	68%
Hispanic	10%
Black	5%
Other	4%
Chinese	4%
Indigenous	4%
Japanese	3%
South-East Asian	3%
West Asian	2%
South Asian	2%
Jewish	1%
Korean	1%
Pacific islander	1%

Source: IGDA DSS 2021

↘ LGBTQIA+ community

In games, LGBTQIA+ representation has indeed seen some increase, but is often that of superficial or marginal. Though some games have touched on queer themes, the portrayals do not connect with and are not authentic enough. Reporting by GLAAD and Nielsen claims that nearly one in every five respondents, about 17%, identify themselves as part of the LGBTQIA+ community. Nevertheless, games with LGBTQIA+ main characters or storylines make up less than 2% of all console games out there right now[26]. This is a sharp contrast considering the fact that even if LGBTQIA+ individuals contribute tremendously to the games audience, they are rarely represented in games.

26. Ibid Geek Queer (2024)

Gamers, irrespective of their sexual orientation, are calling for more representation and inclusion of diverse stories and characters. For the LGBTQIA community, almost three-quarters of the people polled want to see even stronger queer storylines and projects, and almost one in three of the non-LGBTQIA players under 34 agree with that [27]. Nonetheless, the quality of representation is as important as its existence. Nearly 70% of LGBTQIA+ players and 46% of non-LGBTQIA+ players express their reluctance to buy or play a game with harmful stereotypes or clichés about the LGBTQIA+ community. Moreover, 68 to 70 percent of non-LGBTQIA+ players agree that for them it is indifferent if the games have LGBTQIA+ options or stories [28]. Furthermore, straight players comprising 8% of the respondents show more inclination to buy or play games having gay or transgender lead characters, with a higher percentage in the ones having lesbian or bisexual protagonists [29].

In the case of LGBTQIA+ players, representation significantly influences their games choices. The percentage of people more inclined to purchase or play a game with the option to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual character in the game's storyline, is 63%, in comparison to the 36% who are not influenced by this fact [30]. While society has become more accepting of gay and lesbian characters, thus making it easier to be included, transgender characters are met with more resistance. Customizable games are a frequently suggested method for character representation, and this is a good way because the flexibility allows the participants to express their gender

27. Ibid Tech4Gamers (2023)

28. Tech Princess. (2022). Videogiochi, diversità e inclusione. https://techprincess.it/videogiochi-diversita-e-inclusione

29. Lifewire. (2024). Femme-identifying gamers to get more opportunities with the gamehers in 2025. https://www.lifewire.com/femme-identifying-gamers-to-get-more-opportunities-with-thegamehers-in-2025-8679432

30. International Game Developers Association (IGDA). (2023). Inclusive game design toolkit. https://www.igda.org/

31. Ibid Cook, L., & Makar, E. (2021).

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identity, yet this possibility of representation should be seen as the starting point for LGBTQIA+ representation in video games, rather than the exception [31].

There are many obstacles to the proper workforce integration of LGBTQIA+ developers in the games industry such as bias and a lack of institutional support. It is true that many companies understand the importance of the workforce being diverse and inclusive in order to avoid discrimination, but the way to achieve inclusiveness is still full of difficulties. LGBTQIA+ community members underrepresentation in the games industry highlights the bigger inclusivity problem present in the games culture [32]. Genuine and diverse LGBTQIA+ representation in games not only makes it better for LGBTQIA+ gamers, but also serves the medium itself in a way that is more engaging, multilayered, and authentic.
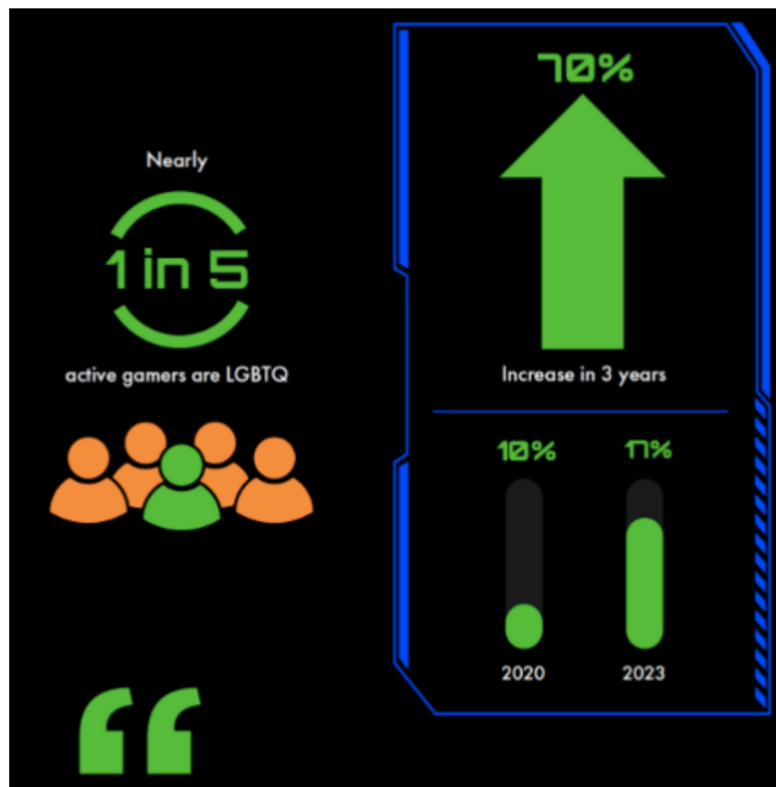
31. Ibid Cook, L., & Makar, E. (2021).
32. Ibid International Game Developers Association. (2021).

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People with disabilities and neurodivergence

The issue of the representation of people with different disabilities in video games presents different faces and challenges, involving both the content of the games per se and the inclusivity of the industry. Although some progress has been made, the number of characters portraying disabilities is still small, and the participation of people with disabilities in game development is still a challenge due to existing barriers[34].

In video game narratives, disabled characters are infrequent and usually portrayed in stereotypical ways. There are only a handful of games that are led by characters with disabilities, or that touch on their lives in a meaningful or authentic way. The use of accessibility features for players with vision, hearing, or movement impairments in the settings menu, among others, is a breakthrough. For example, audio-based games that are designed for blind and visually impaired players, are a good example of technology contributing to accessibility[35]. Nevertheless, despite the progress made, the industry still neglects this audience, thus a large number of potential users are unserved.

There are serious challenges for people with disabilities in the games industry, some coming in the form of inaccessible workplaces and the lack of support systems. However, the data is shocking: DSS (Developer Satisfaction Survey) 2023, shows that 44% of the respondents have stated that they have a physical or mental difference and among them, 24% report neurodivergence, 15% have psychiatric or mental illness, and smaller percentages identify with physical, intellectual, or sensory disabilities[36]. Compared to the general

34. AbleGamers Foundation. (2022). 2022 accessible games industry report. https://www.ablegamers.org/reports
35. Ibid AbleGamers (2023)
36. International Game Developers Association (IGDA). (2023). Summary report. https://igda-website.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/01161842/2023-04-14_IGSA-DSS-2023_SummaryReport.pdf

working population, these percentages are remarkable, and indicate the high presence of workers with disabilities in the games industry, the potential that the industry has to be more inclusive, as well as maybe a factor that worsens some conditions. The complexity highlights the need for more intense research to obtain a clearer picture of the obstacles the disabled employees in games are encountering and the ways the industry can facilitate them.

The market for accessible games hardware and software is still developed enough, even in the time of the increased acceptance of its importance. While some companies, as well as smaller independent studios, have done a great job in this area, a significant part of the games sector still ignores the needs of people with disabilities, despite the fact that about one-quarter of all adults have a disability, with even more reports of differences coming from those working or engaging in games[37]. The difference that exists shows the enormous potential of designing games and tools that will accommodate a wider range of users[38]. Valid representation through narrative, easier to access gameplay, and providing developers with a disability-friendly work environment are not only an ethical framework but also opportunities for companies to expand their reach and better their own creativity[39]. It is necessary for the industry, going forward, to think from the perspective of inclusion as a key element in game designing and development processes.

37. Ibid AbleGamers (2023)
38. Ibid AbleGamers Foundation. (2022).
39. Ibid Anastasopoulos, E., & Papadopoulos, A. (2019).

Source: IGDA DSS 2021   ■2019 ■2021

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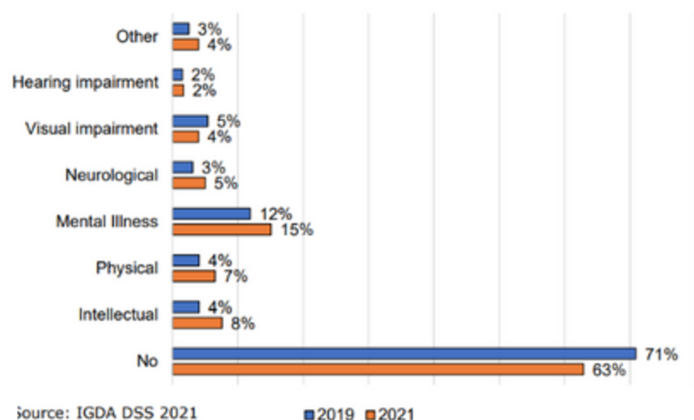
↘ Different age groups

The inclusion and representation of different age groups in the video games sphere reflect the expanding and increasing diversity of players and employees in the industry, but serious gaps are still present in the provision of what older adults need and expect, and the intergenerational appeal [40].

As far as players are concerned, games demographics indicate a wide range of ages that engage with the medium. In the U.S., as of 2018, 28% of gamers were under 18, 29% aged 18-35, 20% were 36-49, and 23% were over 50. Likewise, 40% of UK players are over 36, which is almost one-third of the whole population [41]. This shows that games is no longer a hobby simply occupied by the young, with older adults increasingly choosing video games for entertainment, stress relief, and mental fitness. According to a study conducted by AARP in 2023, the number of gamers aged 50 and older has risen by 30% in 6 years, with almost half of them playing the games [42]. Despite this growth, many senior players complain about being overlooked by the industry. They cite barriers such as too complicated game mechanics, intrusive commercials, and the view that games are mostly meant and designed for young people [43]. All of these problems discourage older players from being more active even though their interest in games keeps on mounting. The growing age group of gamers makes it possible to create games that are relatable to all, and also help in dealing with clichés about the reasons and identities of the people playing games.

In the workplace, the games industry has long been the domain of the young, with an average worker's age of 34

40. Ibid AbleGamers (2023)
41. International Game Developers Association (IGDA). (2021). Diversity report. https://igda-website.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/15161607/IGDA-DSS-2021-Diversity-Report_Final.pdf
42. Ibid AbleGamers (2023)
43. Ibid SpecialEffect. (2021).

according to the 2021 Developer Satisfaction Survey (DSS). This is notably younger than the medium ages of workers in countries like the United States and Canada, where the majority of workers are over 40[44]. Young professionals are placed in creative and technical positions, while on the other hand, due to biases about the field, among other reasons, older workers are underrepresented[45]. Since the workforce is getting older and older gamers want to have more personalized experiences, the industry might have to relook at its hiring and development processes to embrace age diversity.

The needs and expectations of gamers over 50 represent a largely untapped market. They appreciate simplicity, accessibility, and entertainment that they associate with their own personal experiences[46]. However, many feel like the ignored group with games that typically introduce themes and mechanics younger people are more familiar with and more interested about. The development of intergenerational games experiences, along with the effort of simplifying games but maintaining their essence and depth, could be the source of a good market niche, and the creation of a strong player base. The adoption of a more diverse and inclusive game design and workforce could not only appeal to various age groups, but also encourage innovation by blending people with different perspectives. As games matures as an influential force and cultural phenomenon, addressing the full spectrum of people's needs from different ages will be a critical part of ensuring that the industry keeps moving forward and staying meaningful.

44. Ibid International Game Developers Association (IGDA). (2021).

45. The Game Designers of North America (GDON). (2022). Diversity and representation in game design: Current trends. https://www.gdnonline.org

46. Ibid AbleGamers (2023)

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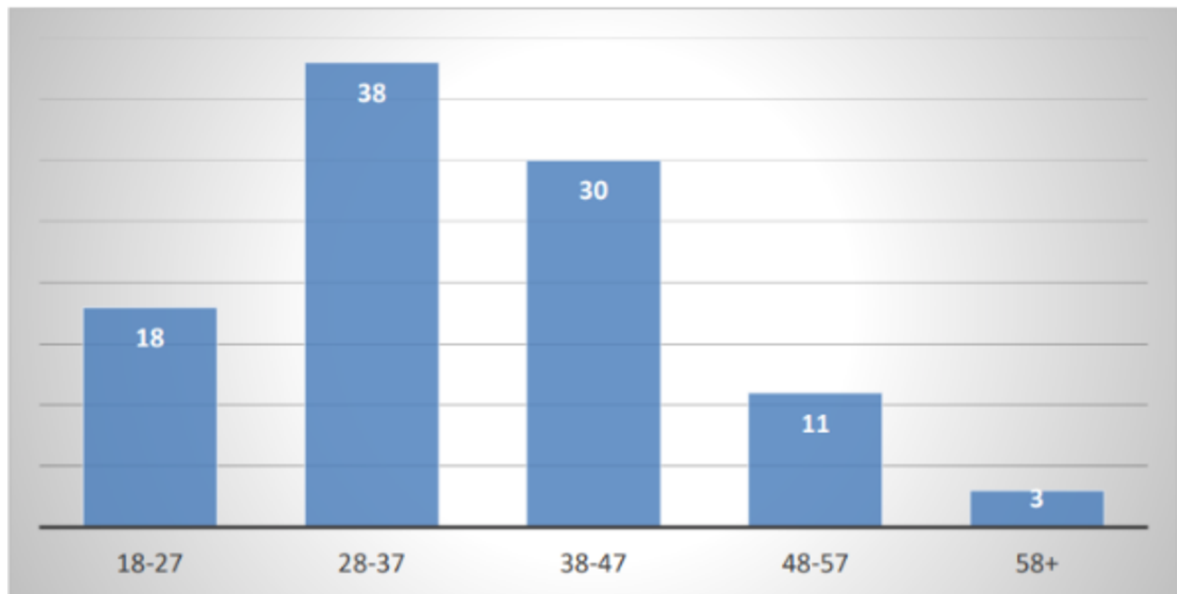
Source: IGDA DSS 2023

↘ Challenges to Inclusivity

There are several challenges to inclusivity in games, in different areas of the process, like the potential for unintentional stereotypes and misrepresentation in design and content, the industry's lack of diversity among developers and decision-makers, the prioritization of profitability over inclusivity, or the possibility of a negative audience perception. Another of the major problems in the industry is underrepresentation, and the games with misrepresentation or stereotyping can harm, for example, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ groups, black minorities, women, and non-binary people, native people, senior gamers, and low-income communities.

44. Ibid International Game Developers Association (IGDA). (2021).

45. The Game Designers of North America (GDON). (2022). Diversity and representation in game design: Current trends. https://www.gdnonline.org

46. Ibid AbleGamers (2023)

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⬊ Design and Content

Games are powerful means to reflect social issues and bring new perspectives and change to the world. However, the projection, design and creation of the narrative content often are characterized by underrepresentation of diversity, stereotyping, or even exclusion. The mechanisms for storytelling, character, and mechanics are frequently designed for specific types of audiences, while overlooking the experiences and identities of the rest of the players, who are from different backgrounds or characteristics[47].

Many games show the male characters as the main characters, with common archetypes, like heroes, addressing almost only on white cisgender, heterosexual, male figures. This viewpoint lacks the consideration of the diversity of the player base worldwide, briefly or stereotypically representing groups such as women, people of color, LGBTQIA+, and people with disabilities. For instance, according to a 2024 report, it was found that less than 2% of the games involve LGBTQIA+ content, regardless of the demands of the player base for more inclusive representation[48].

Only the inclusion of marginalized groups is not enough; sometimes, their representation is characterized by the worst stereotypes. The frequent hypersexualization of women, the portrayal of supporting or villainous characters by people of color, and LGBTQIA+ characters are portrayed as meaningless characters for the narratives, just for diversity. By the same token, disabled characters are usually presented as either pitiful, or on the other hand, inspirational heroes, instead of being described as complex beings[48].

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47. Ibid Cook, L., & Makar, E. (2021).
48. Ibid Geek Queer (2024)
49. Ibid AbleGamers Foundation. (2022).

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The games industry has massive room to grow as a narrative platform, with the opportunity to reflect social issues and foster empathy and community. However, the reality is that many do not reach this expectation, but games stick to superficial and cliche narratives instead. Some inclusive games, like Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice, among others, show storytelling's effect, by reflecting mental health challenges in the game's experience [50]. Nevertheless, it is important to note that these kind of games are more the exceptions than the rules.

By creating inclusive and accessible content and games, not only a bigger audience can relate to it, but the experiences are enriched, and through reflecting real life, the sense of community of the players is increased. Inclusive narratives have the potential to start conversations about important topics, like identity or representation, promote understanding, and even challenge societal norms [51].

The way to deal with these shortcomings is to think about diversity from the beginning of the process, when the game developers start the design. In order to do so, cultural consultations and collaboration with experts, among others, are some of the methods used to faithfully represent different groups in the world, by assigning players the option of a gender, ethnic group, or any other ability that stands for different identities, through flexible game options [52].

50. Ibid SpecialEffect. (2021).
51. Ibid AbleGamers Foundation. (2022).
52. Ibid International Game Developers Association (IGDA). (2023).

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⬂ Industry Practices

In the video game industry, the absence of diversity among staff is a major issue and challenge. When the teams composing the products are made of people with one ethnicity or gender, the results are products with limited perspectives, not satisfying the demands of a diverse audience. This lack of diversity can translate into promoting stereotypes, such as the belief that women are not gamers, or the incorrect portrayal of female or LGTBIAQ+ characters. Also, people belonging to underrepresented groups who have notable talent but feel overwhelmed by such an environment might leave the industry, feeding the already existing circle of exclusion[53].

Opposed to this, a diverse team is the key to more creative and innovative ideas. Whether through varied backgrounds, experiential lives, or cultural roots, the diversity of the game creators impacts all stages of development, ensuring that the games can draw from a wider range of imagination and tools. This way, not only problems get solved more successfully through this method, but is also fundamental to the creation of the tale that is of general interest for the public[54].

Involving diversity not only will create more interesting and relatable games but also allow for hiring from a bigger talent pool. Companies that support equal hiring opportunities and promote career development possibilities for women, people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, and other minorities empowered them with a better chance to improve their work culture and also gain better business results[55]. As an example, the United Kingdom's game industry can become a model for inclusion

53. Diversity in Tech. (n.d.). Diversity in games: Why it matters and how to improve.
https://www.diversityintech.co.uk/diversity-in-games-why-it-matters-and-how-to-improve/
54. Ibid The Game Designers of North America (GDON). (2022).
55. Ibid Women in Games. (2023).

and diversity. It is important that businesses achieve the knowledge of being diverse employers when they engage these practices. Operating systems and policies that sustain work-life balance like having generous family leave, and anti-harassment training create an atmosphere for everyone to work safely and positively.

Besides that, one of the crucial decisions is to make the products represent diverse characters, and keep away from stereotypes, like avoiding aspects that may alienate female players. Inclusive productions, such as Riot Games and their bold change of hiring more women and minorities, prove that it can actually be done[56]. The industry must diligently study its procedures to determine if any practices are indicative of bias and, as a consequence, take steps to construct a fairer future along with the inclusion and non-discrimination rules of games and esports[57]. Driving inclusive policies and diversity in teams will not only provide better product but also foster the creation of a more inclusive and fair games environment.

↘ Audience Perception

The audience's perception and games community are crucial and influential, especially in the cases of toxicity and the resistance to changes. The growing prevalence of consumers who participate in the games industry demonstrate that firms must address inclusivity in all their activities. Discrimination has many consequences, and as reflected in different researches, 77% percent of female gamers face gender-based discrimination[58], 28% of players that have experienced harassment in games avoid the ones with bad reputations, or even 22% percent stop playing those kinds of games[59]. However, there is some reluctance, too.

56. Ibid Lifewire. (2024).

57. Ibid International Game Developers Association (IGDA). (2023).

58. Reach3 Insights. (2022). Women in Gaming Report: What changed in 2022? https://www.reach3insights.com/2022-women-in-gaming-report

59. World Economic Forum. (2024). How we can tackle toxicity to create a more inclusive gaming environment. https://www.weforum.org/stories/2024/01/inclusive-games-tackling-toxicity/

Lately, the games industry has placed more emphasis on inclusivity. Nevertheless, a good number of gamers have issues with what they see as forced storylines. Tech4Gamers published a survey recently that showed that 95% of respondents do not care about inclusivity in games[60]. This indeed gives us proof about the divergence between the audience's expectations and the artistic decisions of companies.

Even though inclusivity might be a topic of discussion and controversy, its importance is notable. The inclusion of diversity in video games is not only an opportunity to represent the different segments of society into the virtual world but also a chance to have all players be able to identify with the characters and stories[61]. Portraying main characters of different backgrounds, genders, and other identities is critical for enriching the game's experience and helping players to be connected to the game on a human level. However, it is important that the narrative does not become forced or unrealistic by trying to incorporate inclusivity, and does not negatively affect the quality of the product[62].

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60. Ibid Tech4Gamers (2023)

61. Ibid The Guardian (2020)

62. Ibid Lynch, T., Tompkins, J. E., Gilbert, M., & Burridge, S. (2024)

TOOLS AND FRAMEWORKS

Strategies for Enhancing Inclusivity

Design and Development: How can the Design Process Incorporate Inclusivity from the Start?

Inclusivity is greatly significant in games, due to the fact that it is able to influence the dynamics in social relations and cultural interactions. Games are a very effective means of storytelling and expression through them, and when they capture diverse voices, they can be a force to end stereotypes and develop empathy. The current games industry is witnessing several key trends in inclusivity, that indicate a positive movement towards a more inclusive games landscape, where players of all kinds can find representation and connection. Inclusion present in games activities may bring in dialogue about important issues, providing the gamers with a chance to view things from the other angles and to understand situations better. Trends on inclusivity are growing strong in the current games industry, and, slowly, there is a positive move towards a more inclusive game landscape.

Both, the industry and the developers, use different ways to address the inclusivity, highlighting the importance of inclusive storylines, diverse character representation, and interacting with the community, by the creation of characters and storylines with more various backgrounds, identities, and experiences. Social issues, mental health, and personal identity are being used more for narrative topics and ideas, and there has been a higher participation of the diverse communities in the development processes, providing feedback, and creating inclusive online communities that appreciate diversity among players. In addition, the act of the inclusion of diverse groups is a

mechanism for the creation of a higher level of involvement and attachment for the players, which will in turn lead to the growth of the games community, and therefore awaken the spirit of creativity and innovation within the game development.

In the studies of and reports from institutions such as AbleGamers and Meeple Like Us, it is indicated that nowadays more and more board games are designed and published with the objective of creating more accessible and inclusive games experiences [64]. Research findings show:

↘ Inclusive Design Trends

1. An inclusion-centered approach is now a new standard for games, which are incorporating elements like tactile elements for the visually impaired players, color-blind adapted components, as well as language simplified for accessibility. Game designers and developers are changing their perspective and adopting a more inclusive design, aiming at including all players in the experiencing and enjoying their games. They are paying attention to the needs of players with disabilities, coming up with diverse character personalization options, and telling narratives that are about a range of experiences to varying degrees [65].

↘ Diverse Representation

2. Lately, there has been a great surge of character diversity in games, including gender and also ethnicity. In numerous cases designers chose to introduce both male and female versions of player boards or characters. Besides that, there are certain games like "Spirit Island" which are most of the time considered as good examples for their representation of the characters [66].

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64. Meeple Like Us. (2023). Inclusive design in board games: A guide. https://www.meeplelikeus.co.uk
65. Meeple Like Us. (2020). The accessibility of board games: A report on representation and inclusive design. https://www.meeplelikeus.co.uk/reports
66. Ibid GamesRadar. (2021).

↘ Diverse Development Teams:

Creating mixed teams is very crucial in case of inclusive game creation. Companies are aware of how much benefit it is to have workers from different backgrounds and create inclusive workplace environments and cultures. This could be translated as diversity hiring, equipping employees with the relevant skills through inclusion training, and creating non-discriminatory areas for open dialogue. The increase of inclusion and diversity in development teams is a successful way to make the game sector able to create inclusive games easily. The recruiting strategies, team-building techniques, and strategies of internal training are the main elements to satisfy these needs. Workshops that promote topics such as the well-being of under-represented groups, equity, and inclusion act as catalysts in the skill development of team members, to create inclusive content. Programs that focus on minority groups in games (women, LGBTQIA+, and people of color) can contribute to the diversifying of the talent pipeline[67].

↘ Community Feedback

Board game companies are exploring and working closer and closer with underrepresented communities, like people with different disabilities, taking their input and feedback to go through during the design process, to be able to consider inclusivity and accessibility in games from the very beginning of the creation process. By the discussion, with diverse panels, insights about the wants and the expectations will be made clear to the developers, that through interacting with voices of underrepresented players, will be able to gain a better understanding of their needs and preferences. Because of

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67. Ibid International Game Developers Association (IGDA). (2023).

player feedback, essential for improvements, games that speak to a varied and more extensive demographic may be developed. Through analytics, feedback, and tools like Reach3 Insights, the companies can have insights from different games communities, identify areas needing more representation or accessibility[68]. Engaging players representing different nationalities and cultural backgrounds during the testing phase leads to a final release that is globally enjoyed. Player behavior patterns and levels of participation in the demographic section can be evaluated to demonstrate potential barriers or areas of exclusion.

Strategic partnership, Awards and Recognition

To collaborate with organizations that are involved in the area of promotion of diversity and inclusion in games could be a proper direction towards the improvement of the situation. Partnerships by groups such as Black Girls Code, AbleGamers, and Women in Games can be organized to provide coordination, resources, and advocacy for minorities and underrepresented groups in games. There are specialized awards, like the 'InnoSPIEL' that recognize the integration and advancement of accessibility and inclusivity in board games[69].

Upgrading inclusivity in game research, mechanics, team making and communities is essential, and there are strategies to further the pursuit of this goal, starting from education and awareness creation, and including others like cultural consultation, implementation of flexible gameplay options (adjustable difficulty

68. Ibid Reach3 Insights. (2022).
69. Ibid AbleGamers (2023)

settings, customizable controls, multiple play modes...), narratives that reflect various experiences, inclusive marketing and promotion methods, community building, and regular updates based on feedback and societal change. The incorporation of inclusivity from the very start, from the design process, is key and can also be fostered by having diverse development teams, regular feedback, or using inclusive design frameworks, like this same one.

Thus, game making and designing can ensure that everyone has the opportunity to engage with and enjoy games. By prioritizing inclusivity, the games industry can cultivate a more vibrant, diverse, and sustainable future, broadening the community and fostering a richer and more varied player base.

What Tools or Frameworks Could Help Developers Create More Inclusive Games?

Creating more inclusive games requires intentional strategies, tools, and frameworks that enable developers to integrate diversity and accessibility into every stage of the game design and development process. These tools and frameworks not only streamline efforts but also ensure inclusivity becomes an inherent aspect of creative decision-making rather than an afterthought.

Categories of Inclusivity in games

Inclusivity in games is multifaceted, and can be categorized into several key areas, each focusing on different aspects of ensuring games are accessible, representative, and welcoming to diverse players. The industry and developers are working more and more to ensure games are more welcoming and accessible to everyone, considering representation, accessibility, community engagement, flexible gameplay, narrative design, and more, to foster an environment where all players feel seen, heard, and valued. These efforts not only improve player experiences but also broaden the games community, ensuring games have a positive, lasting impact on society.

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The following framework highlights the common categories used to define or categorize inclusivity in games:

01 Representation and Diversity [70]

This category makes sure that characters, stories, and game settings are based on a wide spectrum of identities, backgrounds, and experiences. It includes:

- Character Diversity: The representation of characters of various genders, different ethnicities, sexual orientations, and abilities, and the representation of cultural backgrounds.

- Cultural Sensitivity: Depiction of cultures, traditions, and experiences in a respectful and realistic manner, thus avoiding harmful stereotypes.

- Gender Representation: The involvement of different gender identities and the supply of equal chances for various genders in the game roles.

- Disability Representation: Making sure that disabled people can be depicted in games, either as characters that can be controlled by players or as accessibility features (like adjustable controls).

70. Ibid Anastasopoulos, E., & Papadopoulos, A. (2019).

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02 Social Inclusion and Community Engagement [71]

it is about fostering an inclusive environment in which players of all backgrounds and abilities feel welcome, respected, and part of the community. It includes:

- Non-toxic Communities: The environment should be such that players can safely interact with those of different identity and capabilities, with no one being harassed or discriminated against in terms of identity or ability.

- Inclusive Social Features: Promoting conditions for players to trust one another and work together aside from their personal backgrounds or capabilities e.g., cooperative gameplay, customize avatars, and social tools.

- Community Building: The involvement of dissimilar communities in the development phase, by giving them a chance to provide their views, participate in focus group interviews, or even through public consultation.

- Anti-bullying Mechanisms: Instruments to report their grievances, and measures to deal with toxic behavior in online settings,

71. Ibim World Economic Forum. (2024).

- thus creating a safe environment for all players.

03 Gameplay Flexibility and Customization [72]

Here the players are highlighted. It is mostly about giving players the power to control how they interact with the game, allowing them to personalize the experience to fit their individual needs, preferences, or abilities.

- Adjustable Gameplay Settings: Players are given the freedom to change features according to their needs, like the difficulty levels of the game, the amount and quality of in-game help, and the games mechanics (for example, if the players want a faster or slower game, they can do it; they can choose whether the objective will be simplified or if they will play the longer version).

- Character Customization: Creativity begins with the user when creating the characters, they can decide to look how they want and have skills of their choice, so the players' identity can be fully expressed in the game.

- Multiple Play Modes: By offering diverse types of modes, such as solo, cooperative, or competitive, players have the flexibility to select what best goes with their social preferences and skill levels.

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72. Ibim SpecialEffect (2021)

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04

Inclusive Storytelling
and Narrative Design [73]

This category highlights the process of constructing stories in games to ensure all players are capable of connecting with the narrative and being represented:

- Inclusive Story Arcs: Creating narratives about the topics of identity, diversity, and inclusion, giving individuals of different backgrounds the chance to feel part of the story.

- Moral and Ethical Choices: Games that allow players to make decisions that reflect different perspectives, assuring they can explore their own personal values.

- Avoiding Harmful Stereotypes: Making sure that the narrative does not fuel any harmful stereotypes or misrepresentations of marginalized groups, specifically in terms of gender, race, sexuality, or disability.

05

Economic Inclusivity [74]

It is all about extending the reach of video games to a wide range of people by ensuring that even those who are financially less privileged, can still enjoy them, making them accessible to an extensive audiende. This comprises:

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73. Ibim GamesRadar (2021)
74. Video Games Europe. (n.d.). Our diversity pledges.
https://www.videogameseurope.eu/games-in-society/our-diversity-pledges/

- Affordable Pricing: The provision of games at different costs or including free-to-play alternatives that are not restricted by paywalls.

- Microtransactions and Monetization: Verifying that the strategies of monetization do not take advantage of people, guaranteeing the users the ability to access the content in line with rules of fairness, and ensuring the game is not only enjoyable by gamers of higher income.

06 Inclusive Marketing and Promotion [75]

This category focuses on ensuring that marketing practices reflect inclusivity, and that diverse groups of people feel represented in marketing and promotional materials. This includes:

- Diverse Representation in Ads: Featuring a broad range of identities and abilities in promotional content (e.g., trailers, posters, social media).

- Targeting Underserved Communities: Actively reaching out to communities that are often underrepresented in games, such as people with disabilities, elderly players, or marginalized racial/ethnic groups.

- Inclusive Language: Using non-exclusive language in marketing, avoiding terms or phrases that alienate certain groups, selecting inclusive words and pronouns.

75. Ibid Tech Princess. (2022).

07 Inclusive Development Practices [76]

This area focuses on how developers themselves can contribute to inclusivity by promoting diversity within the creation process. This can be achieved in different ways:

- Diverse Development Teams: Ensuring that game development teams are heterogeneous and diverse in terms of gender, race, ability, and other factors, which can result in the creation of more inclusive games.

- Inclusive Design Frameworks: Implementing frameworks or guidelines that prioritize inclusivity from the early stages of development, such as Universal Design for accessibility testing.

- Regular Feedback: Actively seeking feedback from a diverse range of players, including those with disabilities, to improve the inclusivity and accessibility of the game.

76. Ibid International Game Developers Association (IGDA). (2023).

Inclusive Design Frameworks and tools

Inclusive design frameworks prioritize creating experiences that are accessible and engaging for the widest possible range of players. These frameworks guide developers in addressing the needs of diverse audiences, including players with disabilities, neurodiverse individuals, and people from various cultural, gender, and socio-economic backgrounds. Popular frameworks include:

- **Microsoft's Inclusive Design Toolkit:** This involves the recognition of exclusion, the solution of one and the spreading to many, as well as the learning from different perspectives to come up with good products for all[77].

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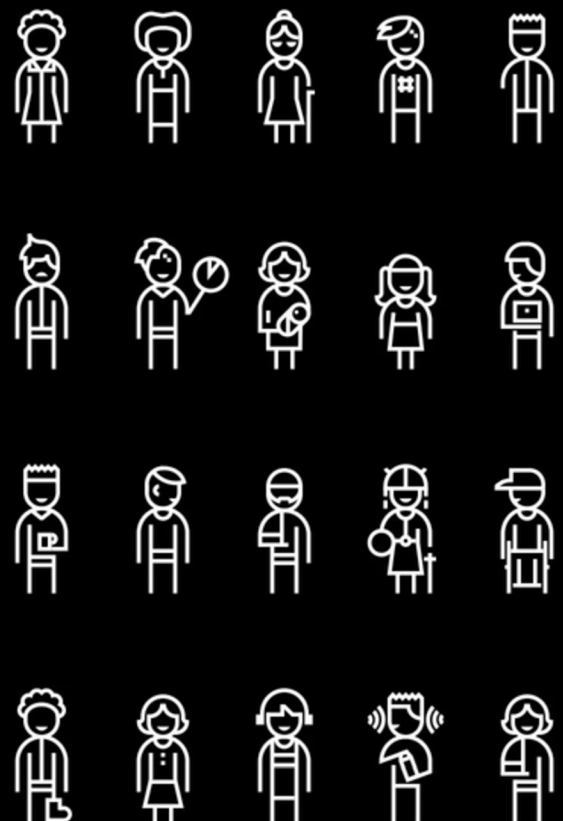
77. Ibid AbleGamers. (2023).

- **AbleGamers' APX (Accessible Player Experiences)**[78]: A useful set of guidelines provided for developers to design games with accessibility features, such as customizable controls, flexible difficulty settings, and sensory-familiar design.

- **The "Inclusive Game Design and Development" Guide**[79], created by the International Game Developers Association in conjunction with Facebook games, offers the various steps and planning process necessary for inclusive game design and development.

78. Ibid AbleGamers Foundation. (2022).
79. Ibid International Game Developers Association (IGDA). (2021).

- **The guide "Building A Fair Playing Field"**, produced by Women in Games, is a powerful tool for inclusivity in online communities, adressing issues of toxicity, harassment, and exclusion, among others. The size of your organization does not make a difference, the Guide offers relevant examples and advice points that can act as information, inspiration, advice, and support. The first hand accounts in "Building a Fair Playing Field" highlight the work being carried out by many stakeholders in games and esports to improve gender imbalance, and also their work towards creating environments and communities which are free of discrimination. The very gender-specific nature of the Guide does not prevent it from implementing inclusive and intersectional solutions for a range of issues, which can be used as a base at every level [80].

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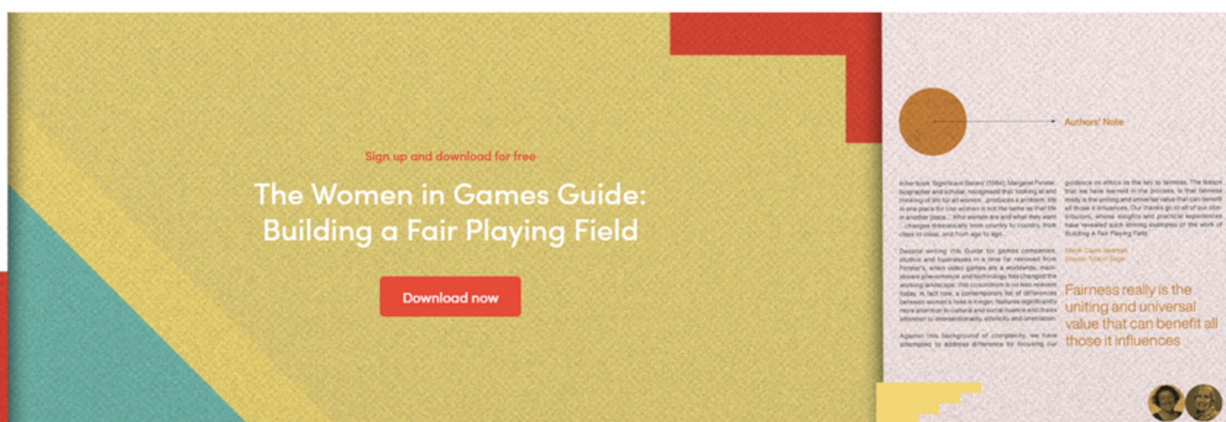
80. Ibid Women in Games. (2023).

Cultural Consultation and Sensitivity Tools

To ensure accurate and respectful representation, developers can engage cultural consultants or use sensitivity tools. These resources help avoid stereotypes and ensure that narratives and characters resonate authentically with the communities they aim to represent. Partnering with experts in specific cultural or identity-based areas ensures that representations are nuanced and grounded in lived experiences.

Moreover, tools like the "Toolkit for developing human rights-based narratives. Step-by-step guide" provides thorough explanations on how to develop human rights-based counter and alternative narratives to hate speech. It presents sets of reflection questions helping analyse, conclude, formulate, and reformulate your messages and think about what you want to convey. This tool guides writers in crafting stories that reflect diverse perspectives without resorting to tokenism.

Accessibility Testing Tools

Testing for accessibility is a crucial step in creating games that can be enjoyed by players with diverse physical, sensory, and cognitive abilities. Tools and methodologies to aid accessibility testing include:

- **Color Contrast Checkers:** Tools like WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) contrast analyzers make sure that the visuals are colorblind-friendly.

- **Binaural Audio Simulators:** To create 3D immersive audio experiences, like the ones in Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice, these tools allow users to create spatial audio effects for visually impaired players.

- **Assistive Technology Testing:** Screen readers, adaptive controllers like Xbox Adaptive Controller, and haptic feedback systems, are some of the devices that test accessibility of the game for users who rely on alternative input methods.
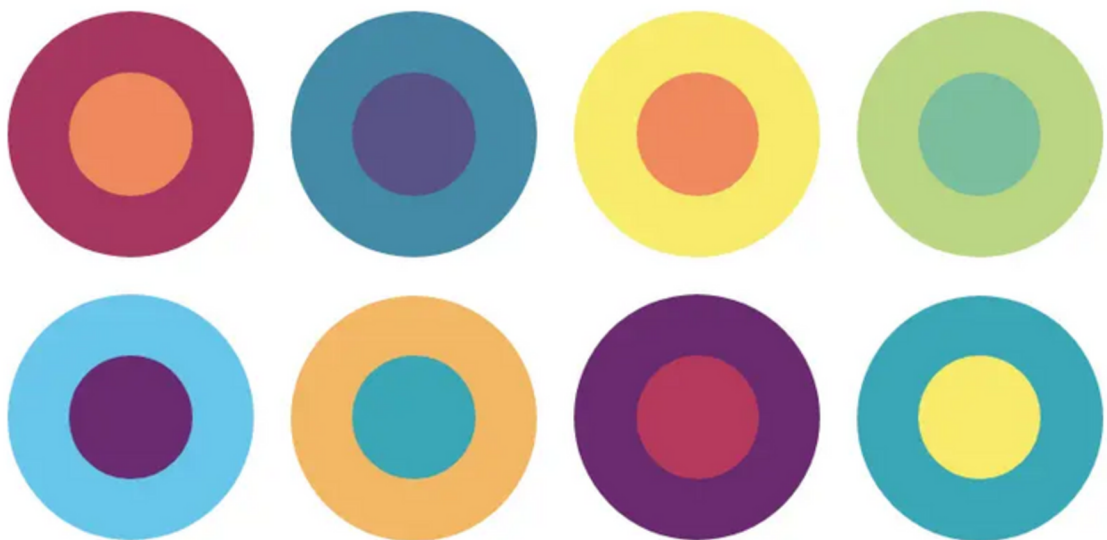
Industry Standards and Certifications

Adopting and adhering to industry standards for inclusivity can help developers stay accountable and ensure that their games meet benchmarks for accessibility and representation.

- Guidelines like those from the International Game Developers Association (IGDA) or the Videogames Europe, are examples of promoting best practices in inclusive game development.

- Programs such as InnoSPIEL and Game Accessibility Awards act to encourage innovation in inclusive design by celebrating games that make an effort to emphasize diversity and accessibility.

Developing inclusive games is not just about meeting ethical standards, but about creating richer, more engaging, and widely appealing experiences. By leveraging the right tools and frameworks, developers can ensure their games are accessible and representative, fostering greater connection and empathy among players while driving innovation and broadening their audience. These efforts not only shape a more inclusive games landscape but also position the industry as a leader in diversity and equity across the broader tech sector.

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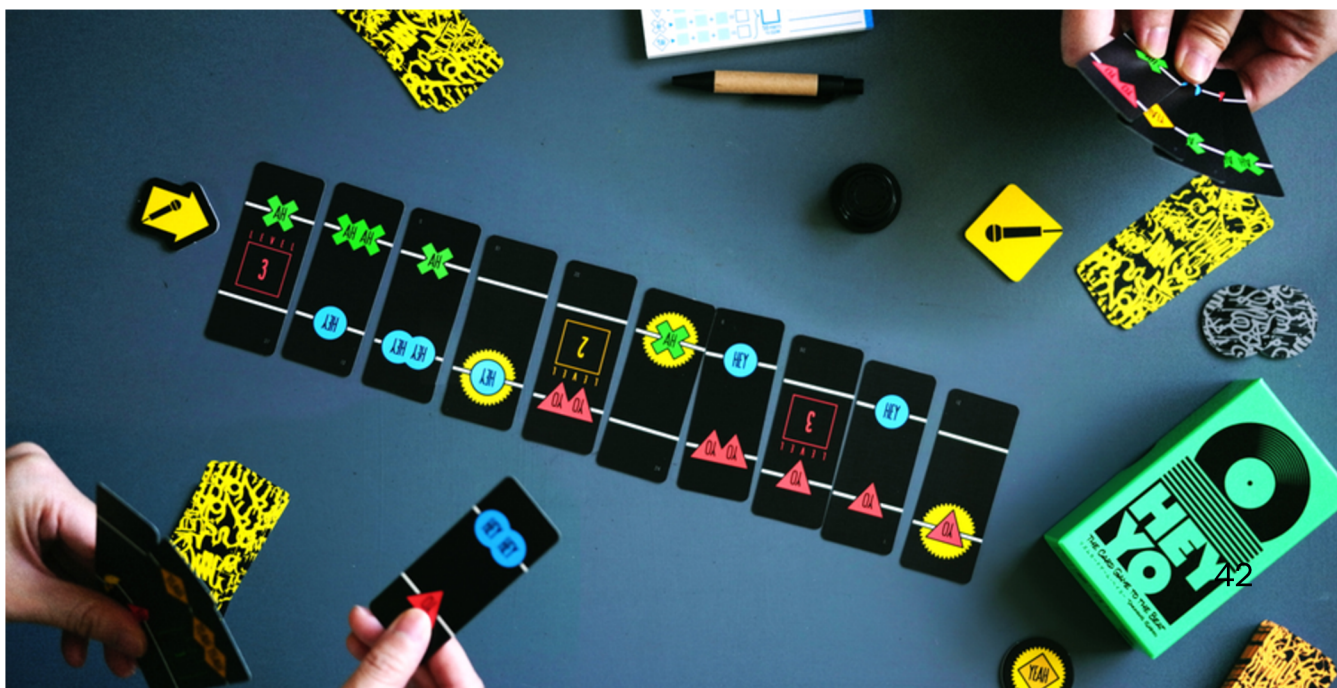
Conclusion and Future Directions

The games industry is on a transformative journey towards greater diversity and inclusion, but the work is far from complete. As one of the most dynamic and influential entertainment sectors, games have the unique power to challenge stereotypes, foster empathy, and bring people together through shared experiences. To fully realize this potential, the industry must embrace inclusivity at every level—from game design to workplace culture.

Diversity and inclusion are essential for expanding the reach and impact of games. By incorporating diverse characters, stories, and accessibility features, developers can create games that resonate with a broader audience. Inclusive practices not only enhance player engagement but also drive innovation and creativity, enabling the industry to produce richer, more varied experiences. Representation matters: when players see themselves reflected in games, it fosters a sense of belonging and validation, making games a more welcoming space for all.

Systemic barriers within the industry, such as underrepresentation among developers and leadership, must also be addressed. Diverse teams bring varied perspectives that lead to more creative problem-solving and more relatable content. Proactively fostering diversity through mentorship programs, equitable hiring practices, and inclusive workplace policies can ensure that the industry remains vibrant, innovative, and reflective of the world's diversity.

The future of inclusivity in games is bright, with emerging technologies like virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) offering exciting new possibilities. These technologies allow for immersive storytelling that can deepen players' emotional connections with diverse characters and perspectives. As developers continue to explore these tools, the potential for groundbreaking, inclusive games experiences grows.

Raising awareness about the importance of diversity and inclusion in games remains a critical priority. Advocacy efforts at industry events, the promotion of inclusive games, and recognition of the work of diverse developers can help drive cultural shifts within the games community. The inclusion of diverse voices not only enriches games but also positions the industry as a leader in promoting positive social change.

Diversity is a driving force behind creativity and innovation. By reflecting the real world in games, developers can craft narratives that resonate deeply with players and foster a sense of connection. Games that embrace inclusivity attract wider audiences, opening doors to untapped markets and ensuring the industry's long-term profitability and sustainability.

Beyond entertainment, games has the power to influence society positively. Inclusive games can challenge prejudice, break down barriers, and encourage understanding. A more inclusive games community promotes better player interactions, reduces toxicity, and cultivates a more enjoyable and respectful environment for all.

To build on the progress made, the games industry must:

- Include inclusivity into all phases of game development, from the idea creation to post-launch updates.

- Encourage diversity in games teams by opening up routes for underrepresented talent to join and be successful in the industry.

- Utilize technological advancements to new and exciting ways of representing different experiences and perspectives.

- Dynamically engaging with gamers and games communities to get feedback, ensure transparency, trust-building, and the use of really inclusive practices in authentic and effective ways.

By prioritizing inclusivity, the games industry can shape a future where everyone feels represented and valued. This is not only an ethical imperative but also a strategic opportunity to strengthen the industry's cultural relevance, economic success, and capacity for meaningful impact. As games continue to evolve, inclusivity will remain a cornerstone for building a richer, more connected, and equitable world through play.

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BEST PRACTICES FOR INCLUSIVITY
By Challedu

Example 1 – Curate-D
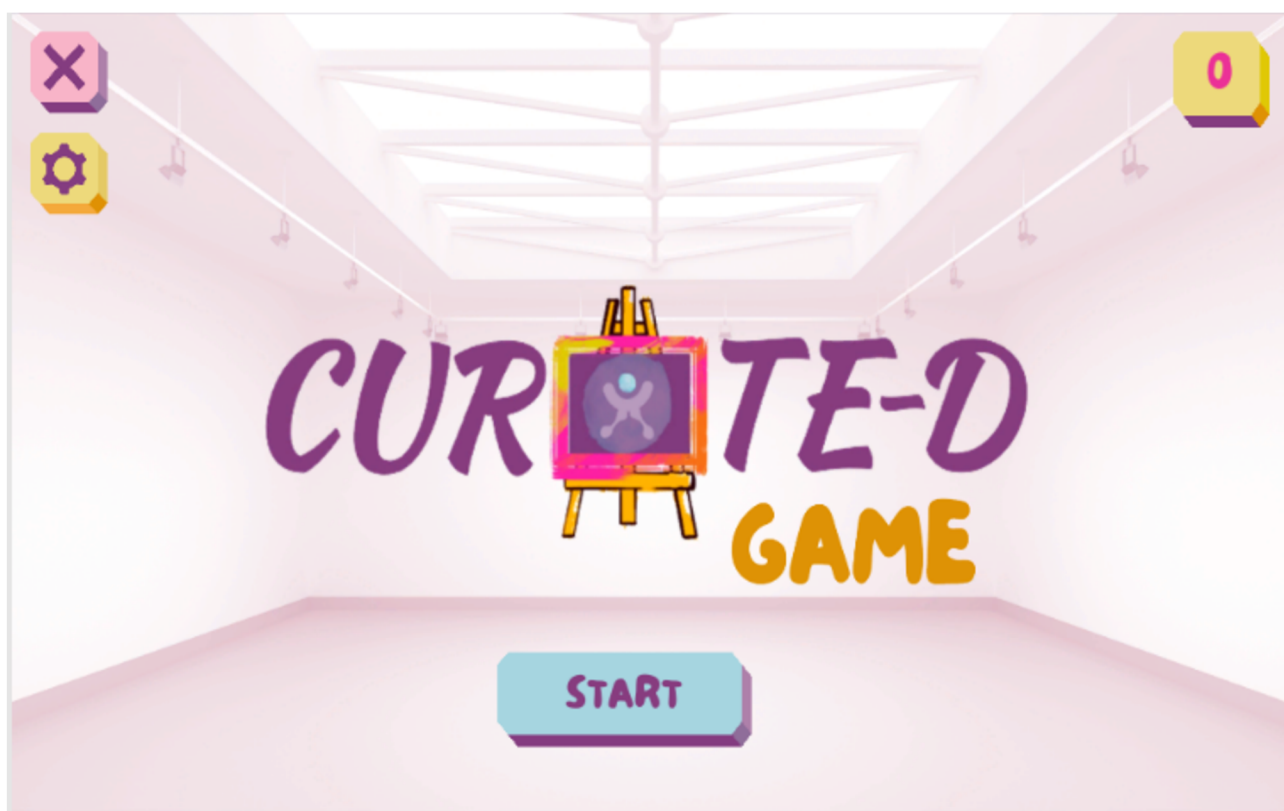
Name/title: Curate-D

Webpage/source:	• https://curate-d.eu/ • https://challedu.com/en/curated-en/ • https://challedu.itch.io/curate-d
Company or organization that has developed the game	• Challedu, • Gaiety School of Acting – The National Theatre School of Ireland, • ASOCIACIÓN FAMILIARES ALZHEIMER VALENCIA, Herakleidon Museum
Type of game	Digital game
Description (about 1000 characters including spaces max)	The main aim of Curate-D is to empower dementia-friendly communities for senior people and promote equal access to Culture. The game promotes inclusivity through the different characters that include a variety of different minority groups like people with dementia, elderly people, people with disability etc. There are many informative scenarios on how to treat and deal with the minority groups mentioned above, in order to train the game players in inclusive practices in their daily lives. The game has a variety of characters with the visuals addressing these characters. One scenario from the game is: A person with dementia is visiting a gallery. They walk around, going off in places that are off limits in the museum. The guard approaches them with tension. Thankfully their caregiver is at the spot and calmly explains the situation to the guard, resolving the issue and bringing awareness to people around them.

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Target group (to whom this game is addressed)	• Staff of cultural organizations • Professional dementia caregivers • General public
Checklist for inclusivity features (indicative list, you can specify as many as you wish)	• People with dementia • Seniors • People with disability

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Example 2 – Legends of Disability

Name/title: Legends of Disability

Webpage/source:	• https://challedu.com/en/legends-of-disability-en/ • https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/17YP60ejFj_w1bTmmdpBlwj8b9YyBMHWI?usp=sharing • https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1tZ295u3VDuxR1Vdcm8ILEM72eQ9mwxiD?usp=sharing
Company or organization that has developed the game	• Challedu, • Best Buddies Greece, • Perpato, • Frodizo
Type of game	Role model based Board Game
Description (about 1000 characters including spaces max)	The game promotes inclusivity through diverse character representation, collaboration, and adjustable difficulty levels depending on the abilities of the participants /players. The game features 100 disabled individual role-models from various backgrounds,offering to the participants a great source for inspiration. Collaborative gameplay encourages teamwork among participants of different ages and abilities, breaking down social barriers. The game prioritizes representation by showcasing the achievements of individuals with disabilities across various fields and with different backgrounds, challenging stereotypes and inspiring players.

One example is the use of character cards featuring real individuals, like Lauren Potter, highlighting their achievements. In the game Legends of Disability, players work together to face various challenges that allow them to harness the strengths and abilities of disabled individuals, transforming them into superheroes. For example, as players successfully overcome challenges, they accumulate superhero characters. They achieve an epic victory by gathering more than 16 superheroes or a legendary victory by collecting between 10 and 15 superheroes.

Target group (to whom this game is addressed)	• People with Disabilities (PWD), • Trainers and Relevant Professionals, • Broader Community
Checklist for inclusivity features (indicative list, you can specify as many as you wish)	Women People with Disabilities

ΒΑΣΙΛΗΣ ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΥ
Παράλοση στο δεξί χέρι

Σπούδασε Υποκριτική, Ιστορία-αρχαιολογία, κατέχω μεταπτυχιακό και διδακτορικό. Είναι σκηνοθέτης, ηθοποιός και ιδρυτικό μέλος του Θεάτρου Ατόμων με Αναπηρία "ΘΕ.Α.Μ.Α" και συνέβαλε στην άρση της προϋπόθεσης της αρτιμέλειας για την εισαγωγή σε δραματική σχολή.

ΠΑΝΟΣ ΖΟΥΡΝΑΤΖΙΔΗΣ
Παραπληγία

Σπούδασε Εργοθεραπία και Θεατρικές σπουδές. Έμεινε ανάπηρος μετά από τροχαίο. Συνέδεσε την ηθοποιία και έγινε μέλος του Θεάτρου Ατόμων με Αναπηρία "ΘΕ.Α.Μ.Α"
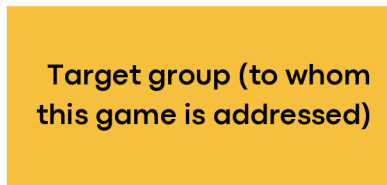
Co-funded by the European Union

Example 3 – Herstory Legends

Name/title: Herstory Legends

Webpage/source:	• https://challedu.com/herstory/ • https://entrepreneurialherstory.eu/ • https://entrepreneurialherstory.eu/wp3-serious-game/
Company or organization that has developed the game	• Challedu, • CIP-Citizens In Power, • CSI-Center for Social Innovation, • HELIXCONNECT - HELIXCONNECT EUROPE, • Dramblys, • IDM-Consulting
Type of game	Role model based Board Game
Description (about 1000 characters including spaces max)	Herstory is a board game that promotes the role of women entrepreneurs, and aims to combat gender-based exclusion through educating the public in the context of entrepreneurship. Through the game, the players experience the everyday challenges an entrepreneur could face and learn ways to combat them through role models and practical knowledge in the field of entrepreneurship. The main idea of the game is to promote visibility and inclusion of femininities in the business sector, but also the contents of the game are overall inclusive. More specifically, the game personas are inspired by many underrepresented groups such as LGBTQI+, Immigrant/Refugees/Ethnic Minorities, People with Disabilities, Motherhood, Rural Areas. A scenario from the game: You find yourself doing the first steps in establishing a business that promotes circular fashion. Find your mentor to facilitate you in addressing challenges related to sustainable sourcing, recycling and consumer behavior.

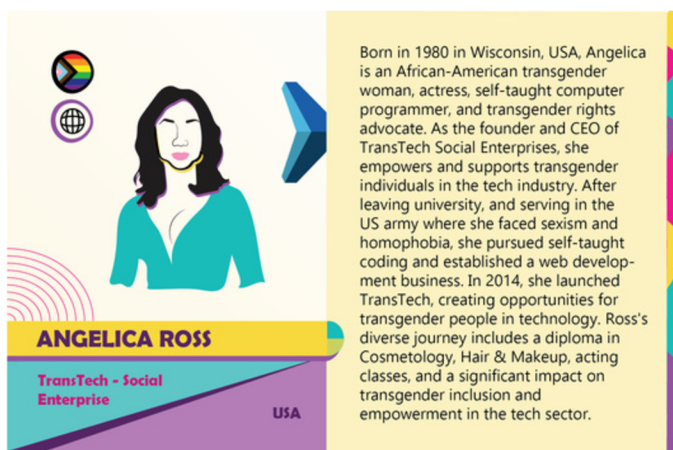|	
	The players will have to use the cards given to them and search through the inclusive entrepreneurs in order to find the right person AND business model, according to their plan.
Target group (to whom this game is addressed)	• General public • Teachers/educators • People with interest in entrepreneurship
Checklist for inclusivity features (indicative list, you can specify as many as you wish)	• Women/Femininities • LGBTQ+ • Immigrant/Refugees/Ethnic Minorities • People with Disabilities • Mothers • Rural Areas

EIRINI BOUNTOUKI

MODEL

GREECE

Since 2006 she has worked as a model, both in Greece and abroad. Belonging to the plus-size category, she has the honor of being the first international plus-size model in Greece. Collaborations with famous brands, Greek designers, runways, magazine shootings, and interviews, are the main part of her profession. Especially in a field where there was no room for a model like her, "I always brought my own chair to the table" she says. The most important thing is the empowerment that is offered to people who identify with a distinctive model type feeling integrated and visible.

ANGELICA ROSS

TransTech – Social Enterprise

USA

Born in 1980 in Wisconsin, USA, Angelica is an African-American transgender woman, actress, self-taught computer programmer, and transgender rights advocate. As the founder and CEO of TransTech Social Enterprises, she empowers and supports transgender individuals in the tech industry. After leaving university, and serving in the US army where she faced sexism and homophobia, she pursued self-taught coding and established a web development business. In 2014, she launched TransTech, creating opportunities for transgender people in technology. Ross's diverse journey includes a diploma in Cosmetology, Hair & Makeup, acting classes, and a significant impact on transgender inclusion and empowerment in the tech sector.

TABLE FLIPPER

Can swap the two challenges with two new (random) ones.

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Best practices
for Inclusivity
By Escape4change

Example 1 – Kids Legends

Name/title: Kids Legends

Webpage/source:	• https://www.kidsandlegends.com/
Company or organization that has developed the game	• Creators: Rüdiger Dorn • Publisher: Conclave Editora
Type of game	A light, simplified GDR game
Description (about 1000 characters including spaces max)	This role-playing game invites children, teens, and newcomers to the RPG world to embark on an inclusive adventure where every player can feel seen, heard, and capable. The game's design encourages accessibility through its thoughtful features, making it easy for all players, regardless of ability, to dive right in without hesitation. Whether you're a beginner or someone with learning disabilities or social anxiety, it offers a welcoming space where everyone can participate and enjoy the experience. In this way, it is not just about playing a game, but about creating a space where everyone can feel involved, valued, and capable. The game goes beyond traditional RPG mechanics to create an environment where players of all abilities can find joy, connection, and empowerment, making it a truly inclusive experience. Kids legends was designed to need simple preparation: it is ready to play right out of the box. It prioritizes inclusivity by making sure that no prior study is needed, as it is designed to be intuitive and straightforward, with rules that are easy to grasp, making it accessible for players who might feel overwhelmed by more complicated systems. The design decision to assign classes based on personality traits rather than statistics or calculations further reduces the pressure, allowing players to naturally connect with the game world through their own unique qualities.

This approach helps everyone, no matter their background or experience, feel empowered to take on a character that truly represents who they are.

Moreover, the use of symbolic dice, marked with easily recognizable icons instead of traditional numbers, allows players to focus on the fun of the game without getting bogged down by numerical challenges.

In addition to these features, Kids Legend fosters collaboration and social interaction, encouraging teamwork among players of different ages and abilities. As players work together, they break down social barriers, learning how to communicate and strategize in ways that build camaraderie. The cooperative gameplay not only strengthens social bonds but also provides an opportunity for players to practice empathy, patience, and inclusivity.

For players who might feel disconnected or overwhelmed, it offers a powerful sense of personal immersion. The game allows players to bring their own identities into the adventure, making them feel like a true part of the game world. By connecting with their characters on a personal level, players can experience a deeper sense of belonging and engagement, which is vital for those who may not see themselves represented in many other games.

Inclusivity Features	• **Encourages Teamwork and Socialization**: Fosters collaboration and interaction among players. • **Simplifies Elements for Social Inclusion**: Streamlines components to promote social inclusivity. • **Offers Personal Immersion**: Allows players to transfer their personal identity into the game world.
Target group (to whom this game is addressed)	• Children and teenagers • General public • People with interest in role-playing games • Beginners in role-playing games
Checklist for inclusivity features (indicative list, you can specify as many as you wish)	• Children and teenagers • People with Disabilities • Schools and High Schools

Example 1 – **Kids Legends**

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Example 2 – Space ability

Name/title: Space ability

Webpage/source:	• https://escape4change.com/en/
Company or organization that has developed the game	• Creators: Escape4change • Publisher: Escape4change
Type of game	Card game
Description (about 1000 characters including spaces max)	Space Ability is a cooperative game where everyone collaborates in an attempt to organize an intergalactic inclusive event. The game is won when all four Objective Cards, representing some elements that customers would like in their event, are resolved and, therefore, moved to the other side of the game board. The event will then be organized, and the CAAI will have completed its mission! The game phases 1. **Introduction:** We introduce the group to the fun side of the game, presenting the environment, the theme and the rules. Each participant receives the necessary information for the subsequent stages. 2. **Play:** The actual game phase. Central elements are cooperation between participants and the immersive experience. The players, if necessary, are supported by the facilitators. 3. **Debriefing:** Sharing between participants and facilitators. The facilitator guides the reflection on the theme of the game, bringing out the connections with the company reality. 4. **Call to action:** The goal of the experience is to activate each participant to promote real change in group dynamics and in the organization.

Inclusivity Features	The activity is designed to enhance the soft skills needed in the workplace (and beyond): • It brings out collaboration strategy as a winning approach; • Game dynamics lead participants to consider others from a new perspective; • The experience fosters a worldview that sees diversity and differences as values and resources; • It encourages participants to embrace diversity and mutual respect in organizational culture, creating a more inclusive workspace
Target group (to whom this game is addressed)	• General public • Teachers/educators • People with disabilities • Schools and High Schools
Checklist for inclusivity features (indicative list, you can specify as many as you wish)	• Children and teenagers • People with Disabilities • Schools and High Schools

UpGameIn

BEST PRACTICES FOR INCLUSIVITY
By Fantazmat Foundation

fantazmat

Example 1 – We Used To Roam Together

Name/title: We Used To Roam Together

Webpage/source:	• https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kKU376Is5-RRIb_GgA7xxgI8q96B9wftwcjrwtbdd6A/edit?usp=sharing • https://forms.gle/4Kh1ai3J5mEq28N57
Company or organization that has developed the game	Fundacja artystyczno-eventowa Fantazmat
Type of game	Larp about diverse aspects of masculinity and the clash between societal norms and expectations and the personal definitions of what it means to be a man.
Description (about 1000 characters including spaces max)	The game strives to cover the topic of masculinity, including all the possible nuances juxtaposed against the pre-created societal norm, using the pretence of a high school reunion of a group of all male friends. Through the use of a character reaction form, the players create two versions of their character: the one that was raised in the community, where the norm was the one and only model of behaviour and the one which they slowly reveal to the others as the reunion. Thanks to the character creation process, the players themselves decide on the themes they would like to explore, both individually and as a group. Issues of gender and sexual identity, belonging to a minority group, mental health have been successfully explored so far. Though the game deliberately focuses on men as a social group, cosplay is allowed and encouraged so that participants identifying themselves differently when it comes to gender may also experience the issues touched upon by the game.

Target group (to whom this game is addressed)	• General public • Activists fighting for equality of rights • Youth workers
Checklist for inclusivity features (indicative list, you can specify as many as you wish)	• General public • Men • LGBTQ+ Community

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Example 2 – Minosia Labirinth

Name/title: Minosia Labirinth

Webpage/source:	• https://www.minosia.eu/
Company or organization that has developed the game	• New Women Connectors – the Netherlands • Solar e.V. – Germany • CIDAS- Cooperativa Inserimento Disabili Assistenza Solidarietà – Italy • Asociatia A.R.T. Fusion – Romania
Type of game	Larp about the emigration crisis from the perspective of migrants and their experience regarding difficulties of arriving to and assimilating to the new country.
Description (about 1000 characters including spaces max)	Minosia Labyrinth is a game that takes place in Minosia, a fictitious country in Europe where a considerable number of migrants arrive due to different reasons. In the country there are about 10 official stations related with migration procedures, such as: Immigration Office, Asylum Centre, Language School, Border Police etc. Migrants have a wide range of options to migrate to Minosia, but the most important objective for them is to integrate completely in the country, which means achieving a legal status, learning the language and finding a job. However, as in European reality, reaching these aims isn't as easy as it seems… The game is designed as an educational tool able to be facilitated thanks to a pre-prepared toolkit.

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Target group (to whom this game is addressed)	• Teachers and educators • Students • Youthworkes
Checklist for inclusivity features (indicative list, you can specify as many as you wish)	• Migrants

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Example 3 – **Blind city**

Name/title: Blind city

Webpage/source:	• https://blindcity.tilda.ws/en
Company or organization that has developed the game	• Elena Rabkina and Magnus Leken
Type of game	Larp about the experience of not being able to see.
Description (about 1000 characters including spaces max)	The setting is a subway car that suddenly stops in a tunnel. The light goes out and everyone plunges into the darkness. "Blind City" is suitable for anyone who wants to explore blindness, sensing the darkness and go on a journey inside themselves. It makes it possible to understand how we perceive other people and ourselves when the visual aspect is excluded, how we react to a new situation and interact with a group of strangers. The design equalizes people with and without visual impairments, putting them in a situation where sight does not play a role.
Target group (to whom this game is addressed)	General public
Checklist for inclusivity features (indicative list, you can specify as many as you wish)	People with Disabilities

BEST PRACTICES FOR INCLUSIVITY
By Odd Statue Games

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Example 1 – Wingspan

Name/title: Wingspan

Webpage/source:	• https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/266192/wingspan
Company or organization that has developed the game	• Designed by: Elizabeth Hargrave, • First published by: Stonemaier Games.
Type of game	A medium-weight, Family type of game.
Description (about 1000 characters including spaces max)	In this game, players are bird enthusiasts seeking to discover and attract various birds to their network of wildlife preserves. Players draw from hundreds of unique bird cards and play them in one of their habitats. Through actions they also gain food tokens to feed their species, and lay different kinds of eggs, represented in a variety of colors. By choosing an engaging theme focused on the world of birds, including over 170 illustrated birds, Wingspan promotes understanding of diverse bird species, encourages interest in wildlife, and might also spark educational conservations across diverse groups of people. Furthermore, the theme of bird-watching itself is neutral and inclusive/non-exclusive, attracting a wide audience regardless of their cultural background, gender, age, or ethnicity. The rules of the game are simple enough, making it suitable for any type of gamers, welcoming even the less fans of the hobby in general.
Target group (to whom this game is addressed)	Anyone who is interested in learning more about nature & birds' wildlife, combining education with gaming/entertainment.

Checklist for inclusivity features (indicative list, you can specify as many as you wish)	Female Designer Bird/Animal Lovers Nature/Wildlife Awareness & Sensitization Diverse Bird Species instead of Stereotypical Characters Gender-Neutral Text in all Written Material

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Example 2 – **Fog Of Love**

Name/title: Fog Of Love

Webpage/source:	• https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/175324/fog-of-love
Company or organization that has developed the game	• Designed by: Jacob Jaskov, • First published by: Floodgate Games.
Type of game	A medium-weight, Thematic type of game.
Description (about 1000 characters including spaces max)	Fog of Love is a 2-player game where you will create two vivid characters who meet, fall in love, and face the challenge of making an unusual relationship work. Promoting inclusivity, this game offers three different box cover versions, featuring silhouettes of same-sex couples! Taking it a step further, the designer (Jacob) partnered with another game designer, Nikki Valens, a member of the queer and transgender communities, to identify any cards or scenarios that were not inclusive to Jacob's desired level. Later on, Nikki also designed an expansion for the game with a direct focus on telling "stories about exploring gender identity and attraction"; another huge step towards unambiguous representation.
Target group (to whom this game is addressed)	General public (Anyone in a relationship). The game fosters raising awareness of managing relationship issues.
Checklist for inclusivity features (indicative list, you can specify as many as you wish)	• LGBTQ+ Community • Same-Sex Couples Awareness & Sensitization • Various Versions of the Box Cover Promoting Inclusivity • Diverse Romance Game Scenarios • Gender-Neutral Text in all Written Material

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Example 3 – **Pandemic**

Name/title: Pandemic

Webpage/source:	• https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/30549/pandemic
Company or organization that has developed the game	• Designed by: Matt Leacock, • First published by: Z-Man Games.
Type of game	A medium-weight, Family type of game.
Description (about 1000 characters including spaces max)	In Pandemic players are disease-fighting specialists, each with a unique strength, confronting several virulent plagues that have broken out simultaneously around the world. As a team, your mission is to research for the cure while treating disease hotspots. Each player, using a deck of cards, can travel between cities, treat infected populaces, discover a cure, or build a research station, while at the same time Epidemic cards accelerate and intensify the diseases' activity. The game emphasizes teamwork against global health issues, which enhances the playing experience by focusing on group success rather than individual competition. Additionally, it features a diverse cast of characters from various professions, ethnicities, genders, and backgrounds, promoting cultural diversity and representation. Lastly, by raising awareness of global-range issues, it encourages players to think about real-world applications, and fosters a spirit of global cooperation.
Target group (to whom this game is addressed)	General public. The game fosters raising awareness of dealing with global health issues.

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Checklist for inclusivity features (indicative list, you can specify as many as you wish)	• Teamwork Spirit & Group Success • Women & Ethnic/Racial Minorities (Box Cover & In-Game Art) • Global Health Issues Awareness & Sensitization • Gender-Neutral Text in all Written Material

Useful Resources

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