



# NUGAMERS HANDBOOK

PROJECT N. 2023-1-SE01-KA220-VET-000155267



# Table of Contents

- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – NUGAMERS HANDBOOK ..... 2
- INTRODUCTION ..... 4
- UNDERSTANDING THE LANDSCAPE: GIRLS, WOMEN AND GAMING..... 6
- PART 1: ENGAGING GIRLS IN GAME DEVELOPMENT .....10
  - Challenge: Overcoming Self-Doubt and Societal Expectations in Game Development Education.....10
  - Challenge: Lack of Awareness About Career Paths in the Games Industry.....12
  - Challenge: Family Concerns About Career Stability in Game Development .....14
- PART 2: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS IN EDUCATION .....16
  - Challenge: Creating an Inclusive and Supportive Learning Environment.....17
- PART 3: JOB SEEKING AND EMPOWERING GIRLS TO COMPETE IN THE GAME INDUSTRY JOB MARKET.....19
  - Challenge: Breaking Barriers and Building a Career.....20
  - Challenge: Overcoming challenging Workplaces .....22
- CONCLUSIONS .....25

## Executive Summary – NuGamers Handbook

The NuGamers Handbook is a practical guide for vocational and higher education providers who want to make game-development education more attractive, welcoming and sustainable for girls, women and gender-diverse learners. It sits alongside two other NuGamers outputs: a [Fact Sheet](#), which summarises research and focus-group insights on women in gaming, and a [Toolkit](#), which contains ready-to-use activities for students, families and staff. Together, these three elements are designed to help institutions move from awareness of gender imbalance to concrete changes in how they present, teach and support game-related studies.

The Handbook starts from a clear message: there is no solid evidence of a gender gap in the abilities needed for game development. Instead, **differences in participation are driven by issues such as who feels they belong, who has access to information and networks, and how safe and supported learners feel in educational and professional environments**. Girls and women are already active and engaged players, but often do not see themselves reflected in the way game development is described, taught or valued.

The NuGamers Fact Sheet shows a strong paradox. Women and girls make up a large share of players—especially on mobile platforms—yet remain under-represented in the professional game industry and are more likely to experience harassment, exclusion and toxic behaviour in online gaming spaces. At the same time, focus-group participants describe powerful motivators: creativity and self-expression, storytelling, community and collaboration, personal growth and recognition, and the desire to create games that have educational or social impact. What holds them back is not a lack of interest or talent, but a combination of stereotypes, lack of visible role models, unstable working conditions and learning environments that can feel isolating or hostile.

To respond to this, the Handbook proposes five guiding principles for education providers. **Visibility** means that women and gender-diverse people are seen and acknowledged as players, students, professionals and leaders in game development. **Relevance** emphasises that game development should be presented not only as a technical field but also as a space for narrative, art, social issues and everyday concerns that many students care about. **Safety and belonging** call for learning environments where harassment and discrimination are clearly not tolerated, and where support structures are visible and trusted. **Voice and agency** focus on giving learners real influence over projects, themes and ways of working, rather than positioning them as passive recipients. Finally, **continuity** stresses that support should not be limited to recruitment; it should accompany learners from first interest through study, job search and the early stages of their careers.

The structure of the Handbook follows the learner journey and is organised into three main parts.

**Part 1 – Engaging Girls in Game Development** looks at the earliest stages: how programmes are presented, how families perceive game careers and how students encounter the idea of studying game development in the first place. It addresses challenges such as self-doubt, stereotypes that frame games and technology as “for boys”, and family concerns about career stability. Suggested strategies include promoting positive affirmations and confidence-building, showcasing a wide diversity of games and roles, and providing clear, evidence-based information about industry growth, working conditions and transferable skills. The Handbook highlights the importance of involving families through open days and orientation events, where they can see student work, learn about different roles, and understand how skills gained in game development connect to many creative and technical fields.

**Part 2 – Challenges and Solutions in Education** focuses on what happens once students have entered a programme. Here, the central challenge is creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment where girls and gender-diverse learners are not made to feel like outsiders. The Handbook explores how unconscious bias, stereotypical division of tasks in group projects, and a lack of visible role models can lead to reduced participation, lower confidence and even withdrawal from studies. It suggests inclusive classroom practices such

as using inclusive language, actively moderating discussions, setting clear expectations on behaviour, and addressing problematic incidents promptly.

This part also looks at collaborative learning and community building. It encourages educators to design group work that mixes skills and backgrounds intentionally, rotates roles, and recognises different forms of contribution. Activities such as co-designing class agreements and using community-mapping tools are presented as ways to help students articulate how they want to work together and what they need to feel safe and respected. The aim is not only to improve the classroom atmosphere but also to prepare students for real-world team cultures, giving them vocabulary and strategies to deal with conflict, exclusion and unfairness.

**Part 3 – Job Seeking and Empowering Girls to Compete in the Game Industry Job Market** addresses the transition from education into work and the first years of a career. It identifies two main challenges: breaking into a competitive industry where informal networks and visibility matter, and dealing with workplace cultures that may reproduce gender bias and unequal opportunities. The Handbook emphasises the value of networking, mentorship and personal branding, and proposes ways education providers can support students in these areas through structured activities and guidance.

A strong focus is placed on soft skills: communication, collaboration, emotional intelligence and leadership. These skills help graduates to present their work convincingly, negotiate roles and salaries, handle feedback and stress, and contribute to positive cultural change in their teams. The Handbook shows how these soft skills can be developed systematically through projects, reflection and dedicated exercises, rather than assuming they will appear on their own. It also underlines the importance of teaching students about their rights, how to document their contributions and how to seek support if they encounter discrimination or harassment at work.

Across all three parts, the Handbook is closely linked to the NuGamers Toolkit. Each chapter not only explains the challenges and proposes solutions, but also points to specific activities that can be implemented with students, families or staff. This allows education providers to move directly from reading about a problem to testing one or two concrete actions in their own context.

The overall message of the NuGamers Handbook is that meaningful change does not require perfection or complete transformation overnight. Instead, it invites institutions to start from where they are, choose a focus area that feels both important and manageable, involve students as partners, and experiment with small, well-designed interventions. Over time, these changes can contribute to game-development programmes in which more learners can recognise themselves, feel that they belong and believe that they can build a future in the industry.

# Introduction

Welcome to the NuGamers Handbook!

NuGamers is an Erasmus+ cooperation partnership that supports education providers in the gaming sector to design **more gender-inclusive orientation activities and curricula**. The overall goal is to make game development education more attractive, welcoming and sustainable for girls and women – and, by extension, for all gender-diverse learners.

The project produced three core results:

## **NuGamers Fact Sheet – Women in Gaming:**

Describes the current situation of girls and women in gaming in Europe. Identifies **motivators, obstacles, risks** and **solutions** for studying and working in game development and other STEM fields.

## **NuGamers Handbook:**

Offers methods and tips for designing gender-inclusive curricula and orientation activities in the gaming sector.

## **NuGamers Toolkit:**

A set of creative, interactive tools (e.g. role-model based games, cards, videos, podcasts) for use in orientation and awareness-raising activities with learners, families and stakeholders.

Together, these resources are meant to help education providers move from awareness to **concrete change** in how they present, teach and support game development studies.

## How to use this handbook

This guide has been created to support and inspire individuals from all gender identities who are passionate about pursuing a career in game development. As the game development industry continues to grow and evolve, it is essential to foster an environment where everyone, regardless of gender, can see themselves as future leaders and creators in the field and thrive in a historically male-dominated industry.

The handbook responds to several needs identified in the NuGamers project:

- Education providers in the gaming sector need **clear guidance** on how to design gender-inclusive curricula and orientation activities.
- Girls and gender-diverse learners face **specific barriers** – from harassment in online games to stereotypes in education and unstable working conditions – that can discourage them from entering or staying in the sector.

This handbook addresses the unique challenges faced by individuals from gender-diverse backgrounds at each stage of their journey—whether they are just starting to explore game development, navigating their educational experiences, or advancing in the workforce. It offers research-based insights, practical strategies, and real-world solutions to empower individuals to succeed and excel in the industry.

### 1.2 Who is it for?

The handbook has two main audiences:

- **School, VET and HE staff** in the gaming and creative tech sector
  - managers and programme leaders
  - teachers and trainers
  - guidance counsellors and orientation staff
- **Learners and early-career professionals**
  - girls and women interested in or already studying game development
  - gender-diverse individuals navigating game-related education and work

The tone and examples are primarily aimed at **staff**, but most sections can be shared directly with students or adapted into workshop material.

The handbook is organised in five main parts:

Understanding the Landscape – key data about girls and women in gaming and STEM, plus what we learned from NuGamers focus groups.

Engaging Girls Before They Enrol – orientation activities and communication strategies that respond to real motivators and challenges.

Designing Inclusive Curricula and Learning Environments – practical guidance for course and programme design, classroom culture and assessment.

Supporting Transitions to Work – how education providers can prepare students to navigate the game industry, including soft skills and wellbeing.

You can:

- read the handbook from start to finish;
- jump directly to a part that matches your current task (orientation, curriculum review, career guidance).

Throughout the handbook, you'll see small "Toolkit connections" suggesting where and how to plug in NuGamers toolkit activities.

Throughout this guide, we focus on two key aspects:

### 1. **Engagement and Career Development**

In the first part, we discuss overcoming the barriers that often prevent individuals from gender-diverse backgrounds from considering a career in game development. From addressing self-doubt and societal expectations to showcasing the wide range of skills needed in the industry, this section aims to spark interest, build confidence, and provide a clear pathway for anyone to explore the many roles within the field.

### 2. **Navigating Education and the Workplace**

The second part focuses on the educational environment and the skills needed to succeed in the game development industry. We explore how to create inclusive and supportive learning environments, foster leadership skills, and build resilience to overcome challenges faced in the workplace, ensuring that everyone can thrive, regardless of their gender identity.

This handbook also provides practical advice on empowering individuals to build strong professional networks, navigate job-seeking processes, and effectively handle bias and discrimination in the workplace. By the end of this guide, our goal is to ensure that individuals from all gender identities feel welcome in game development and are equipped to lead, innovate, and help transform the industry for the better.

The future of game development is diverse, dynamic, and filled with opportunities. We hope this handbook serves as a source of inspiration and guidance, helping individuals from all backgrounds build successful and fulfilling careers in this exciting and ever-evolving field!

## Understanding the Landscape: Girls, Women and Gaming

### Women and gaming: the big picture

The fact sheet highlights a clear paradox. Women constitute a large share of players, particularly on mobile platforms, yet they remain under-represented in the professional game industry. At the same time, they report higher exposure to harassment, cyber-bullying and exclusion in online spaces, which shapes how safe and welcome they feel in the broader gaming ecosystem.

Despite this, there is no evidence of a gender gap in ability when it comes to the core skills needed for game development. The differences we see in participation are not rooted in capacity or talent, but in factors such as stereotypes and expectations about who “belongs” in gaming and technology, a lack of visible role models and accessible information, cultures that feel hostile or unwelcoming, and unstable or precarious career conditions.

---

*For education providers this means that the central task is not to search for exceptionally gifted girls who can “keep up”, but to remove the obstacles that prevent them from seeing themselves in this field, choosing related studies and remaining in the sector over time*

---

### Motivators: why girls and women are drawn to games

The focus groups behind the fact sheet also make it clear that girls and women are not only present in gaming, they are deeply motivated by it. Many participants describe games as a space for creativity and self-expression, where they can tell stories, design characters and worlds, draw, compose music and experiment with visual and narrative styles. Games also offer fantasy and immersion: the chance to enter new worlds, explore different identities and enjoy the satisfaction of completion, whether that means finishing a story arc or collecting everything a game has to offer.

Community and collaboration play an equally important role. For many, gaming is tied to playing with friends, belonging to guilds and online groups, co-creating content and sharing experiences. Personal growth and recognition matter too. Learners talk about the appeal of mastering new skills, building portfolios, receiving feedback and seeing their work acknowledged by others. Finally, a strong motivator is the desire for meaningful

impact and alignment with personal values. Girls and women often express interest in creating games that educate, challenge stereotypes or address social and emotional issues they care about.

Orientation activities and curricula that resonate most with these learners are those that speak directly to these motivations. When game development is presented only as a technical area, disconnected from creativity, community and impact, many simply do not recognise themselves in it.

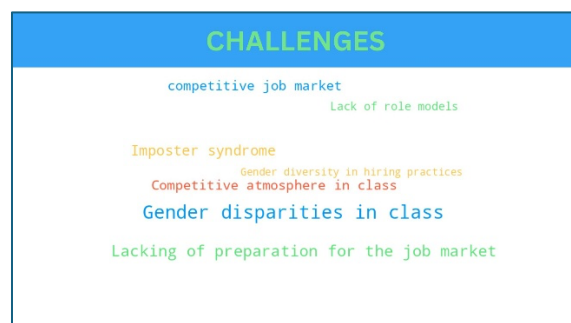


### Challenges and obstacles

Alongside these positive motivations, the fact sheet identifies a series of obstacles that shape how girls and women move through gaming, education and work. Harassment and toxic culture in online games are a recurring theme, and similar patterns can sometimes appear in educational settings and workplaces, making these spaces feel unsafe or exhausting. Career uncertainty and instability also weigh heavily: the industry is highly competitive, often organised around short-term projects, and associated with long hours and a risk of burnout.

Educational gaps and institutional barriers further complicate matters. Programmes may rely heavily on self-directed learning without providing enough structured support or may not offer adequate help with mental health and wellbeing. Gender disparities and unequal opportunities for recognition and advancement mean that women and gender-diverse professionals can find it harder to be seen, promoted or credited for their work. On top of this, work–life balance can be particularly challenging for those with caring responsibilities or other constraints, especially in environments where long or irregular hours are normalised.

These combined obstacles influence whether girls decide to choose game-related studies at all, how they experience their education if they do enrol, and how long they are able or willing to stay in the sector once they graduate.





## Design principles for gender-inclusive gaming education

Taken together, this landscape points to several guiding principles for Education providers who want to work towards more gender-inclusive gaming education.

### The first is visibility.

---

*Learners need to see that women and gender-diverse people are already present in games as players, creators, teachers and leaders, and that their contributions are recognised.*

---

### The second is relevance.

---

*Game development should be connected to creativity, storytelling, social impact and everyday life, not presented only as a narrow technical specialty.*

---

### A third principle is safety and belonging.

---

*Learning environments must be places where harassment and discrimination are not tolerated and where support structures are easy to find and trust.*

---

### A fourth is voice and agency.

---

*Learners should have real influence over projects, themes and working methods, and feel that their perspectives matter in how programmes are shaped.*

---

**Finally, continuity is crucial.**

---

*Support should not end at the point of admission; it needs to accompany learners across the entire journey, from first interest through studies, job search and the early stages of their careers.*

---

The rest of this handbook takes these principles and translates them into concrete strategies, examples and activities that institutions can adapt to their own context.

## Part 1: Engaging Girls in Game Development

The game development industry is a dynamic and rapidly growing field that combines creativity, technology, and innovation. However, despite its potential, many girls encounter significant barriers that prevent them from considering game development as a viable or appealing career path. These challenges often stem from societal biases, self-doubt, and a lack of understanding or support from families.

Cultural and societal biases frequently portray gaming and game development as male-dominated fields, discouraging girls from exploring these interests. Many girls struggle with self-doubt and imposter syndrome, questioning their abilities and whether they belong in such a space. Additionally, families may have doubts about the stability and viability of a career in game development, further dissuading girls from pursuing their passions.

This section of the handbook provides strategies to:

1. Address self-doubt and build self-confidence through positive affirmations, visualization techniques, and role models.
2. Challenge societal biases by showcasing diverse game content and the wide range of skills involved in game development, from art and storytelling to programming and problem-solving.
3. Educate families about the stability, growth, and opportunities in the game development industry to alleviate their concerns and gain their support.

### Challenge: Overcoming Self-Doubt and Societal Expectations in Game Development Education

#### ***Developing Self-Confidence and Self-Belief***

Our interviews and focus groups confirm that societal expectations and stereotypes often discourage girls from pursuing careers in male-dominated fields, such as game development. Limited visibility of role models and persistent cultural narratives can lead to feelings of imposter syndrome and self-doubt. These challenges can lead girls to underestimate their abilities and avoid taking the risks that are essential for growth and innovation. Addressing these barriers is crucial to fostering a more inclusive and empowering environment in education and career preparation.

---

*Imposter syndrome is the persistent feeling of not being good enough or fearing that one's success is undeserved, despite evidence to the contrary. It often leads to self-doubt, perfectionism, and a reluctance to take on challenges. Recognizing and addressing these feelings is essential for personal growth and self-confidence*

---

## **Possible Solutions**

### **1. Promote Positive Affirmations**

Cognitive-behavioural research indicates that consistent use of affirmations can reframe negative thought patterns. Affirmations help students internalise positive beliefs about their abilities and reduce self-doubt. In practice, educators can invite students to write short, realistic statements about their strengths and progress (for example, “I am learning to solve complex design problems” rather than “I am perfect at coding”). These can be used as reflection prompts at the start or end of a session, integrated into learning journals or shared in small groups for those who feel comfortable. Toolkit activities can make this more concrete.

After a **Serious Game Design** session, for instance, students can write affirmations that focus on what they discovered about their creativity, teamwork or problem-solving during the design process. Following a **Career Reality Check**, they can formulate statements that connect their current learning to future roles (“I am building skills that are relevant for narrative design” or “I can see several paths into the industry”). Over time, combining these structured activities with affirmation exercises normalises talking about achievements and effort, and offers a counterweight to the internal “critical voice” that many girls and gender-diverse students describe.

### **2. Showcase Role Models**

Representation matters. Highlighting successful women in game development challenges stereotypes and demonstrates achievable pathways to success. This strategy reinforces the belief that girls belong in this field. Role models can be invited as guest speakers, featured in case studies, or presented through short videos and profiles embedded into regular teaching, not just special events. It is helpful to include a range of stories: people in different roles (art, programming, production, community), different stages of career, and different backgrounds and life situations. When role models talk honestly about mistakes, doubts and learning processes—not just success—they become more relatable and help students see a realistic future for themselves.

The **Showcasing** activity in the NuGamers Toolkit is an ideal format for this. Students, alumni and invited professionals present their projects and stories in a structured, supportive setting, either on campus or online. Combined with **Career Reality Check**, which makes labour-market information and typical career paths visible, these sessions allow learners to connect real people, real jobs and their own developing skills. Used regularly, showcasing events turn role models from something distant into an ongoing, lived part of the learning environment.

### **3. Create Supportive Peer Networks**

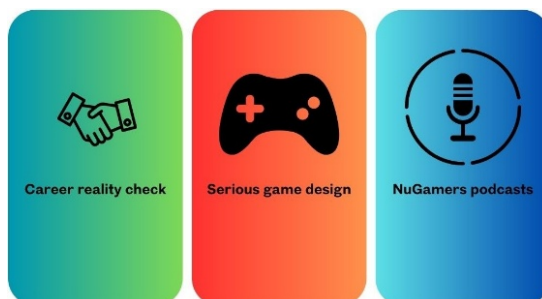
Peer collaboration encourages a sense of belonging and mutual encouragement, combating feelings of isolation often experienced in male-dominated environments. Educators can support this by designing group work that values cooperation over competition, setting clear norms for respectful interaction and rotating roles so that the same people are not always in charge. Beyond the classroom, programmes can facilitate informal spaces such as student clubs, affinity groups or peer-mentoring schemes where girls and gender-diverse learners can share experiences, exchange advice and celebrate each other’s achievements. When these networks are recognised and supported by the institution, they become a visible resource that students can rely on when they encounter challenges.

Toolkit activities can act as catalysts for these networks. Collaborative formats like **Serious Game Design** naturally bring students together around shared interests and values, giving them a reason to continue meeting beyond a single assignment. **Showcasing** events can also be framed as community moments rather than one-off presentations, with time built in for informal conversation, feedback and networking. By intentionally using these activities to seed ongoing connections, educators help transform individual participation into a stronger, supportive peer community.

---

*Possible activities to perform, included in the toolkit:*

---



## Challenge: Lack of Awareness About Career Paths in the Games Industry

### **Encouraging Interest in the Games Industry: Highlighting the Diversity of Opportunities** **Possible Solutions**

#### 1. **Showcase the Diversity of Games Content**

Expose students to a broad range of game genres and content, from educational games to indie storytelling-focused games. Highlight how games can reflect a variety of themes and interests, including social issues, culture, history and fantasy. This can be done by curating short gameplay clips, trailers or hands-on demos that move beyond mainstream titles and combat-driven narratives. In class discussions, invite students to reflect on whose stories are being told, whose experiences are represented and what emotions or questions the games evoke. When students see that games can explore everything from climate change to mental health, from mythology to everyday life, they are more likely to recognise that their own perspectives and passions are relevant and valuable in this field.

The **Showcasing** activity in the toolkit is a powerful way to support this. Students present and curate games or their own prototypes for peers, teachers and, when possible, families. You can combine this with the **Bias Card Games** activity by asking students to analyse the games they are showcasing through prompts about representation, stereotypes and who is centred or left out. This turns a simple “demo session” into a critical and creative exploration of diversity in game content.

#### 2. **Demonstrate the Variety of Skills Involved**

The games industry thrives on a multidisciplinary approach. Skills like writing, artistic design, music composition, problem-solving and teamwork are equally essential as technical programming. By showing the importance of these diverse skills, students with various interests can see how they can contribute. Educators can break down a single game into its components—narrative, visuals, audio, systems design, user experience, marketing—and ask students to identify which skills were needed at each stage. Inviting professionals from different roles to talk about their everyday work also helps students understand that there is no single “right profile” for game development. This makes it easier for girls and gender-diverse learners who may not identify as “tech people” to imagine a place for themselves in the industry.

The toolkit’s **Discovering Careers in the Games Industry** activity fits well here. Students work with cards or profiles that describe different roles and tasks, matching them to their own interests and strengths. You can follow this with a **Showcasing** session where students present “their” chosen roles

to the group, explaining which skills are involved and how these connect to real projects or games. In this way, skills are not only described in theory but linked to visible examples and future career ideas.

### 3. Highlight the Impact of Games Beyond Entertainment

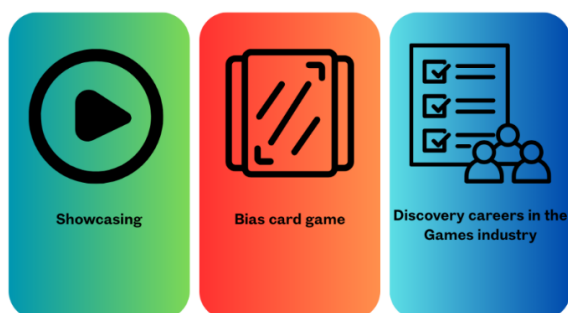
Emphasise how games can be tools for education, social change, therapy and cultural exploration. This broader perspective can inspire students to see gaming as a meaningful and impactful career choice. Show concrete examples: serious games used in schools or healthcare, narrative games that open conversations about identity and mental health, or projects that preserve cultural heritage through interactive storytelling. Encourage students to discuss issues they care about and brainstorm how a game could address or illustrate those themes. When learners realise that game development can be a way to teach, to support others or to challenge injustice, it becomes more than “just fun”—it becomes a form of creative citizenship they may want to be part of.

Here, **Bias Card Games** can be used to surface topics such as discrimination, representation and fairness, which then become starting points for game concepts. Students examine real-world issues through the cards and then imagine how a game might explore or challenge these patterns. Linking the analysis of bias directly to creative design helps students see how their values and concerns can shape the kinds of games they might one day create.

---

*Possible activities to perform, included in the toolkit:*

---



## Challenge: Family Concerns About Career Stability in Game Development

Many families may view game development as a risky or non-traditional career path. Common concerns include the perception of limited job stability, unclear earning potential, or a lack of understanding of the industry's scope. These misconceptions can deter students from pursuing their passion for game development due to a lack of family support or approval.

### **Possible Solutions**

#### 1. **Provide Data on Industry Growth and Opportunities**

Share statistics and reports demonstrating the rapid expansion of the global games industry, both in terms of revenue and number of people employed. Where possible, include national or regional data so families can see what this means in their own context. Highlight that game studios come in many sizes, from small indie teams to larger companies, and that jobs exist not only in entertainment games but also in serious games, education, health, simulation and XR. Make the variety of roles visible: game design, programming, art, animation, narrative writing, audio, production, marketing, community management and user research. When families see concrete numbers, examples of local companies and a broad spread of professional roles, it becomes easier for them to view game development as a serious and sustainable career field rather than a niche hobby.

#### 2. **Showcase Success Stories and Pathways**

Introduce families to success stories of individuals working in game development, with a particular focus on women and other under-represented groups. These stories are most powerful when they show realistic, sometimes non-linear paths: people who changed careers, studied in different countries, combined work with family life or moved between indie and larger studios. Use short talks, video interviews or written profiles to illustrate what their studies looked like, how they entered their first job and what helped them progress. Alongside these stories, provide clear, visual explanations of study and career routes—such as diagrams that link upper-secondary programmes, VET and higher education to different types of roles. This helps families understand that there are multiple ways in, and that stability is often built over time through experience, networks and continuous learning.

The **Showcasing** activity in the toolkit offers a practical format for this. Students, alumni and invited professionals present their work and tell their stories in short, structured sessions that families can attend. You can combine this with **Discovering Careers in the Games Industry** and **Career Reality Check** by inviting participants to explore role cards, labour-market data and example pathways before or after the presentations. This helps families connect personal stories with concrete information about roles, job prospects and study options, making the idea of a future in games more tangible and less abstract.

#### 3. **Emphasize Transferable Skills and Broad Applications**

Explain how skills gained in game development—such as programming, storytelling, problem-solving, teamwork, project management and user-centred design—are highly transferable to other industries. Show concrete examples: graduates who now work in UX design, software development, film and animation, advertising, cultural institutions, education or health technology. During orientation events, you can map course modules to a wider set of occupations, so families see that their child is not “locked into” one narrow sector. This reassures those who worry about volatility in the games market and demonstrates that studying game development can open doors to a broad spectrum of creative and technical careers.

Toolkit activities can help make these links very visible. In **Discovering Careers in the Games Industry**, students work with role cards or profiles that describe typical tasks and skills; families can join this

activity to see how the same competence—like narrative design, systems thinking or user testing—reappears across different sectors. **Career Reality Check** can then provide salary ranges, employment data and adjacent roles outside the games industry. When these activities are combined with showcasing events where students present projects that demonstrate both creative and technical skills, families get a clear picture of how game-related competencies travel into other fields.

#### 4. Engage Families in the Process

Create opportunities for families to directly engage with games and game development to dispel misconceptions and see the value of this career path. Invite them to open days where they can play student projects, visit labs and talk informally with teachers and current students. Offer short, accessible explanations of tools and workflows, so they can appreciate the complexity and effort behind what they see on screen. Consider running joint activities where students explain their work to parents or guardians, or where families try simple design exercises together. When families experience the creativity, collaboration and technical skill involved, they are more likely to support their child's interest and to view game development as a legitimate and worthwhile field of study. Here, you can weave together several toolkit elements. Showcasing can structure the open day, with families moving between stations where students present prototypes, including those developed in **Serious Game Design** activities that tackle social or educational topics. At other stations, families can participate in simplified versions of **Discovering Careers in the Games Industry** and **Career Reality Check**, exploring role descriptions, skills and labour-market information alongside their children. This blended approach turns a traditional info evening into an interactive experience where families learn not only *about* game development, but also *with* their children, building understanding and trust in the chosen path.

---

*Possible activities to perform, included in the toolkit:*

---





## Part 2: Challenges and Solutions in Education

As girls embark on their journey into game development education, it is critical to ensure that their learning experience is inclusive, empowering, and prepares them for future challenges. While education can provide the skills and knowledge needed for a successful career, the environment and culture within educational institutions significantly impact a student's ability to thrive.

This module addresses two key challenges that girls may encounter while studying game development:

### 1. **Creating an Inclusive and Supportive Learning Environment**

Girls may face a lack of representation, unconscious biases and exclusionary practices in their learning environments. This can show up in many subtle ways: being the only girl in a group, having ideas ignored or repeated by others, being assigned less visible tasks in projects, or encountering jokes and comments that make them feel out of place. Over time, these experiences can undermine confidence and reduce participation, even when students are highly capable and motivated.

Addressing these issues involves actively fostering a culture of inclusivity and mutual respect where all students feel valued and supported. Teachers and institutions play a central role here: they can set clear expectations about respectful behaviour, model inclusive communication, and intervene when bias or harassment occurs. It also means designing teaching practices that give every student space to contribute, recognising different strengths and backgrounds, and making sure that women and gender-diverse professionals are visible in course examples, guest talks and materials. When the learning environment signals “you belong here” on a daily basis, girls are far more likely to stay, take risks, and develop their full potential.

### 2. **Transforming Culture to Navigate Challenging Workplaces**

Game development workplaces often mirror broader societal issues, including gender imbalances, unequal access to opportunities and informal cultures that may exclude those who do not fit the dominant norm. Students frequently hear stories about crunch, hostile online communities, or studios where inappropriate behaviour is tolerated. If education focuses only on technical skills and project delivery, girls may enter these environments feeling unprepared to protect their wellbeing or to speak up when something is wrong.

For this reason, education must go beyond technical skills, equipping girls with the tools and confidence to advocate for themselves and others in professional spaces. This includes understanding their rights, recognising subtle forms of bias, practising how to respond to unfair treatment, and learning how to build supportive networks and allies. It also means engaging all students—not only girls—in conversations about ethics, power and responsibility in teams. When programmes integrate these themes into curricula, project work and reflection, they help future professionals contribute to healthier workplace cultures and not just adapt to problematic ones.

The following sections explore these challenges in detail, offering strategies and activities to address them effectively.

## Challenge: Creating an Inclusive and Supportive Learning Environment

### *Explanation of the Challenge*

Many girls report feeling isolated or unwelcome in educational settings where they are a minority. This can be as simple as walking into a classroom and seeing mostly male peers, or as complex as noticing that examples, jokes and references are consistently geared towards one group. Unconscious biases, gender stereotypes and a lack of visible role models can all contribute to a sense of alienation. Girls may find that their ideas are interrupted, overlooked or attributed to others, or that they are assumed to be “less technical” regardless of their actual skills. Over time, these experiences send a repeated message that they do not fully belong. The impact is not only emotional. These dynamics can lead to reduced participation in discussions, reluctance to volunteer for visible roles, lower confidence when presenting work, and in some cases, a decision to leave game development programmes altogether. When this happens, institutions lose talented students and the learning environment becomes even less diverse, reinforcing the cycle.

### Solutions

#### 1. Inclusive Classroom Practices

- **What to Do:** Use gender-neutral and inclusive language when addressing the class, writing assignment briefs and giving feedback. Pay attention to who speaks, who is interrupted and who receives follow-up questions, and consciously invite contributions from all students rather than relying on the most vocal. Set clear expectations at the start of a course about respectful behaviour, including how jokes, comments and online communication should be handled. When instances of bias or exclusion occur—whether in person or in digital spaces—address them promptly and transparently, signalling that they are not ignored or normalised.  
 As part of these practices, you can work with the group to explicitly co-create “**brave space**” **guidelines**. The goal of the brave space activity is to move one step beyond the idea of a traditional “safe space”: instead of avoiding discomfort, students agree on how to engage constructively with challenging topics and with each other. Together, they define rules that support growth—such as listening actively, using “I” statements, respecting confidentiality, giving everyone room to speak and challenging ideas rather than people. These shared guidelines make expectations visible and give both teachers and students a reference point when difficult conversations arise.
- **Why It Works:** When students see that fairness and respect are actively upheld—and that there is a jointly created framework for brave, honest dialogue—they are more likely to feel safe, valued and able to focus on learning instead of self-protection. Inclusive practices, reinforced by brave space guidelines, make it clear that everyone is entitled to the same opportunities to speak, experiment and make mistakes. This reduces the pressure on girls and gender-diverse students to constantly prove that they deserve to be there, and instead allows them to invest energy in developing their skills and creativity.

#### 2. Collaborative Learning

- **What to Do:** Design group projects where teams are intentionally mixed in terms of gender, background and skill sets, and where expectations around collaboration are explicit. Provide guidance on assigning roles so that tasks such as project management, presenting, coding, art and documentation are shared rather than falling into stereotypical patterns. Encourage students to reflect on how they work together, for instance through short check-ins or end-of-project debriefs about communication, decision-making and conflict resolution. Model collaboration in your own teaching by co-creating sessions with colleagues or guest speakers and making your process visible. You can use the **Community Canvas** activity from the toolkit at the start of a group project or course. In small teams, students map out how they want to work together: which strengths each person

brings, how they will share tasks, how they will handle disagreements and how they will make sure everyone is heard. The canvases can then be displayed in the classroom or shared online and revisited during the project. This turns collaboration from something implicit into something the group has consciously designed and agreed on.

- **Why It Works:** Effective teamwork allows students to get to know each other as collaborators rather than stereotypes. When diverse teams work towards a shared goal, students have the chance to appreciate different strengths—technical, creative, organisational, interpersonal—and to see that each is essential for a successful project. This reduces the idea that there is only one “type” of game developer and helps break down assumptions about what girls or boys are “supposed” to be good at. It also mirrors the reality of professional game development, where cross-disciplinary collaboration is the norm.

### 3. Community Building

- **What to Do:** Support the creation of informal and formal networks where students can connect beyond individual courses. This might include women’s groups, queer-friendly game dev clubs, peer-mentoring schemes, student-led game jams or online communities moderated with clear rules. Give these groups visibility by acknowledging them in course introductions, sharing their events and, where possible, offering practical support such as space, small budgets or staff contacts. Involve senior students and alumni so newer students can see concrete examples of people who have navigated similar challenges.

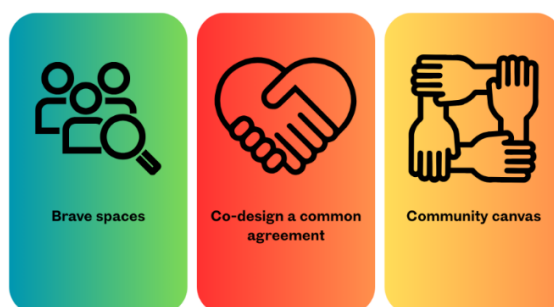
The toolkit’s **Community Canvas** activity can be used to kick-start this process. In Community Canvas, students map out what a supportive learning community would look like for them—who is involved, what kinds of activities and spaces they need, how they want to communicate and what values should guide their interactions. The resulting canvas can inform the creation or reshaping of clubs, events and online spaces, ensuring they respond to students’ real needs rather than assumptions. Revisiting the canvas over time also helps track how the community is evolving and where gaps remain.

- **Why It Works:** A strong sense of community helps counteract isolation. When girls and gender-diverse students know that there are others who share their experiences, they are more likely to stay engaged, ask for help and celebrate their achievements. Using Community Canvas to make these needs visible and shared supports the development of networks that feel genuinely welcoming. Over time, these networks become a source of resilience and collective voice, strengthening not only individual students but the culture of the programme as a whole.

---

*Possible activities to perform, included in the toolkit:*

---



## Part 3: Job Seeking and Empowering Girls to Compete in the Game Industry job Market

The game development industry is a highly competitive field, and while it offers vast opportunities, many girls face unique barriers when entering the workforce. These challenges can range from limited networking opportunities to gender bias and discrimination in the workplace. Empowering girls to succeed in the industry requires targeted support, strategies for overcoming obstacles, and practical solutions that allow them to compete with their male counterparts.

This module addresses two key challenges that girls may encounter while seeking jobs in the game development industry:

### 1. **Breaking Barriers and Building a Career**

To break into the competitive game development market, girls must overcome the barriers that often limit their access to professional networks and opportunities. These barriers can include a lack of visible role models, fewer informal invitations to events or projects, and uncertainty about where and how to meet people in the industry. In many cases, recruitment still relies heavily on “who you know”, recommendations and community involvement, which can disadvantage those who start with fewer connections or who feel less confident stepping into predominantly male spaces.

Building relationships and expanding professional networks can significantly enhance their job prospects and career growth. This involves learning how to present their work, participate in game jams and meet-ups, use online platforms such as LinkedIn or portfolio sites, and stay in touch with peers, mentors and potential collaborators. It also means understanding where different types of roles are advertised, how to read job descriptions critically and how to position their skills for a range of studios and related sectors. Supporting girls in this phase is not only about teaching CV and portfolio skills, but also about helping them see themselves as legitimate members of the professional community and giving them tools to enter and move within that community with confidence.

### 2. **Overcoming Workplace Challenges**

Once in the workforce, girls may face challenges such as gender bias, unequal opportunities for advancement or exclusionary workplace cultures. These challenges can appear in many forms: being consistently assigned “support” tasks instead of core creative or technical work, being left out of informal decision-making spaces, hearing discriminatory comments, or noticing that their contributions are minimised or credited to others. Over time, such patterns can affect motivation, wellbeing and career progression, and may even push talented professionals out of the industry altogether.

To navigate these issues effectively, girls must develop strategies for self-advocacy, managing bias and creating a supportive environment for themselves and their colleagues. This includes learning how to set boundaries, give and receive feedback, document their work and achievements, and seek allies within and beyond their teams. It also means understanding their rights, knowing where to turn when problems escalate, and practising language and behaviours that help them respond to difficult situations without carrying the burden alone. Education and early-career support can play an important role here by preparing girls not only to fit into existing workplaces, but also to participate in making those workplaces fairer and more inclusive for everyone.

The following sections explore these challenges in detail and provide research-based solutions and strategies to help girls thrive in their job search and workplace environments.

## Challenge: Breaking Barriers and Building a Career

### Explanation of the Challenge

The game development industry is still predominantly male, and girls entering this field may find it difficult to build the connections needed to break through. Networking is crucial in identifying job opportunities, securing mentorship, and gaining industry insights, but many girls face challenges in accessing the same networks and platforms as their male peers. These barriers may arise from a lack of representation, limited access to industry events, or a lack of confidence in self-promotion.

### Solutions

#### 1. Networking and Building Relationships

- **What to Do:** Encourage students and early-career professionals to actively attend industry events, conferences, meet-ups and game jams. Online communities, professional associations and social media platforms like LinkedIn, Discord or specialised forums can also be invaluable for connecting with peers, mentors and potential employers. Help them prepare *before* they go: practise short introductions, think about what they want to ask people, and identify a few studios or individuals they would like to meet.

The **Show Your Power** activity in the toolkit is a useful starting point here. Students identify and name their strengths, achievements and values, then practise introducing themselves in a way that reflects these. This can be followed by a **Gamebadge** activity, where each student creates a visual “badge” or profile that summarises their skills, interests and role aspirations. These Gamebadges can be brought to events (physically or digitally) and used as conversation starters when meeting new people. Together, these activities help students arrive at networking situations with a clearer sense of who they are and what they bring, which makes approaching others less intimidating.

- **Why It Works:** Networking is essential in opening doors to new opportunities, whether it’s through introductions, job referrals or collaborative projects. Building relationships with peers, mentors and industry professionals provides visibility and access to career opportunities that might otherwise be inaccessible. When students have already articulated their strengths through **Show Your Power** and turned them into concrete, shareable artefacts with **Gamebadge**, they are better prepared to step into networking spaces with confidence. Instead of feeling like they have “nothing to say”, they can point to real projects, skills and goals, which makes interactions more meaningful and memorable for both sides.

#### 2. Practice negotiations skills

- **What to do:** Help students learn how to gather data on average salaries and working conditions for the positions they are interested in, in their location and in the wider industry. Guide them to understand typical salary ranges for their experience level and skills, including entry-level roles and internships. Support them in writing out a negotiation script and practising tone and delivery, including how to respond to common forms of pushback (for example, “we don’t usually pay that for juniors” or “there is no budget flexibility”).

The toolkit’s **Negotiation** activity is designed exactly for this purpose. In this activity, students work through realistic scenarios, research benchmark data, prepare their own value-based arguments and role-play negotiation conversations in pairs or small groups. You can invite them to integrate elements from **Show Your Power** into their scripts by explicitly linking their achievements—projects

completed, game jams participated in, collaboration experiences—to the value they bring to a team. They can also attach their **Gamebadge** or portfolio summary as a visual reference when practising how they would present themselves to an employer.

- **Why it Works:** Knowledge of salary data allows women to have a solid, fact-based argument, which reduces the uncertainty and self-doubt that often accompany negotiations. It shows that their request is aligned with industry standards, not an inflated or unreasonable ask. Preparing a value-based argument focuses on personal achievements and contributions, which reinforces self-worth. The **Negotiation** activity gives them a safe place to practise this, make mistakes and adjust their approach before they are in a real interview. When students repeatedly rehearse their arguments, supported by the confidence-building work from **Show Your Power** and the clarity of **Gamebadge**, they become far more comfortable asking for what they deserve.

### 3. Mentorship Programs

- **What to Do:** Establish mentorship programmes that pair girls with experienced professionals in the game development industry. Mentors can provide guidance, career advice and emotional support, helping students navigate both the job search and their early careers. Structure the mentorship so that it has clear goals and regular check-ins rather than relying only on informal contact. At the start of the programme, mentees can use **Show Your Power** to map their strengths and challenges and then share this with their mentors as a conversation starter about where they most want support. You can also use **Gamebadge** as a tool for setting and tracking mentorship goals. A student's Gamebadge, with its visual overview of skills, interests and desired roles, gives mentors a quick snapshot of where the mentee is now. Together, they can decide which "badges" to develop next—perhaps adding experience in serious game design, leadership in a group project or contributions to a community event. Mentors can suggest networking opportunities and negotiation strategies, and even practise parts of the **Negotiation** activity with mentees when they are preparing for salary or contract discussions.

### 4. Personal Branding and Self-Promotion

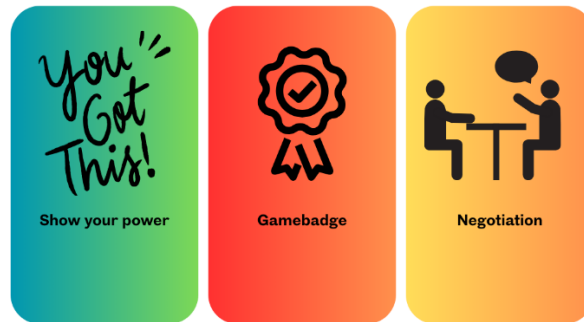
- **What to Do:** Teach girls how to build a strong personal brand by showcasing their work in portfolios, online platforms and social media. This includes selecting and presenting projects that show both technical and soft skills, writing clear project descriptions and keeping profiles up to date. Encourage them to actively share their achievements and skills, participate in online discussions and engage in communities that align with their interests.  
The **Gamebadge** activity can serve as a first step towards personal branding. By creating a playful yet structured representation of who they are as game creators, students start to clarify the themes and roles that define them. This Gamebadge can then be translated into portfolio sections, "About me" texts and social media bios. **Show Your Power** supports this by helping students find the language to talk about their strengths and values in a way that feels authentic rather than boastful. Parts of the **Negotiation** activity can also be repurposed: the value-based arguments they prepare for salary discussions can be turned into short personal pitches for online profiles, portfolios or conference introductions.
- **Why It Works:** Effective self-promotion helps girls gain visibility in the industry, build their reputation and attract opportunities. A strong online presence can demonstrate their passion, skills and commitment to potential employers and collaborators. When personal branding is built on the reflective work of **Show Your Power**, structured through **Gamebadge** and supported by the clear, confident language practised in **Negotiation**, it feels less like "selling yourself" and more like telling a

coherent story about who you are as a creator. This kind of storytelling is easier to sustain over time and more likely to resonate with the people they want to reach.

---

*Possible activities to perform, included in the toolkit:*

---



## Challenge: Overcoming challenging Workplaces

### ***Explanation of the Challenge***

Once girls enter the game development workforce, they may encounter several challenges. These include gender bias, stereotyping, unequal treatment, and exclusion from key decision-making or leadership opportunities. These challenges can undermine confidence, impact job satisfaction, and hinder career progression. It's essential for girls to develop strategies for dealing with these challenges while advocating for themselves and supporting others facing similar issues.

## The Importance of Soft Skills in Navigating Challenging Workplaces

While technical expertise is crucial in game development, soft skills — such as communication, problem-solving, teamwork, leadership, decision making, or also critical thinking, and contest-awareness, emotional intelligence — are equally essential for navigating challenging workplaces and driving cultural transformation. These skills enable individuals to build effective relationships, resolve conflicts, and adapt to changing environments, all of which are critical in both educational and professional settings.

In the context of game development, soft skills not only help students thrive within diverse teams but also empower them to shape inclusive and collaborative workplace cultures. As the industry evolves, the need for well-rounded professionals who can combine technical abilities with strong interpersonal skills is becoming increasingly clear.

### ***Soft Skills that Empower Students in Game Development***

#### **1. Communication**

- **Why It's Important:** Clear and effective communication is fundamental to collaborating in a multidisciplinary field like game development, where diverse skills and perspectives must come together to create a unified product. Designers, artists, programmers, producers and marketers all



need to understand each other's ideas, constraints and needs. Whether it is articulating a design vision, giving constructive feedback, writing clear documentation or working with clients and external partners, good communication ensures that ideas are not only expressed but also correctly understood and acted upon. Misunderstandings can lead to wasted work, conflict and delays, while clear communication keeps teams aligned and projects moving forward.

- **Key Skills:** Verbal and written communication, active listening, non-verbal communication and public speaking are all part of this. Verbal communication includes everyday conversations, stand-up meetings and brainstorming sessions. Written communication covers everything from emails and chat messages to design documents, bug reports and pitch decks. Active listening means paying attention, asking clarifying questions and showing that you have understood what others are saying, not just waiting for your turn to talk. Non-verbal communication—tone of voice, facial expressions, body language—shapes how messages are received. Public speaking skills help students present ideas confidently in team meetings, pitch sessions and external events.
- **How It Translates to Workplace Success:** Strong communication helps students advocate for their ideas, explain their reasoning and address challenges directly instead of letting problems grow in silence. It enables them to collaborate effectively across departments (for example, between design, programming and marketing) and to adapt their message to different audiences, from team-mates to managers and clients. Over time, good communicators are seen as reliable and easy to work with, which improves their chances of being included in important discussions, trusted with responsibility and considered for leadership roles. Moreover, communication skills help in creating trust among colleagues: when people feel heard, informed and respected, they are more willing to share feedback, take risks and support each other.

## 2. Collaboration and Teamwork

- **Why It's Important:** Game development often involves working in cross-functional teams, where each member brings different expertise and viewpoints to the table. No single person can produce a complete game alone at professional scale; it is the combination of design, programming, art, sound, narrative, production and community work that makes a project succeed. Effective teamwork is critical for synthesising these diverse skills and ideas into cohesive game designs. It also helps teams adapt when plans change, technologies evolve or new constraints appear, which is common in this sector.
- **Key Skills:** Cooperation, respect for diversity, flexibility and conflict resolution are central here. Cooperation means working towards a shared goal rather than competing for individual recognition. Respect for diversity includes valuing differences in gender, culture, background, expertise and working style, and recognising that these differences can strengthen the team. Flexibility is the ability to adjust when tasks, priorities or roles shift. Conflict resolution involves addressing disagreements early, listening to different perspectives and finding solutions that keep the project and relationships intact.
- **How It Translates to Workplace Success:** Students who understand how to collaborate productively with others will find it easier to navigate workplace dynamics, especially in environments that require constant cooperation between different departments and roles. They are more likely to be seen as supportive colleagues who contribute to a positive team atmosphere rather than as sources of tension. This can lead to better references, more invitations to join interesting projects and greater long-term stability in their careers. In many studios, promotions and leadership opportunities depend not only on technical skill but also on the ability to bring people together and help teams function well.



### 3. Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

- **Why It's Important:** Emotional intelligence involves understanding and managing one's own emotions, as well as recognising and responding to the emotions of others. In game development, where deadlines can be tight, feedback can be blunt and teams are often passionate about their work, emotional dynamics play a major role. EQ helps individuals avoid reacting impulsively, recover from setbacks and stay open to collaboration even when stress levels are high. In the workplace, this translates to better relationship management, stress management and conflict resolution—key to maintaining a positive and productive environment.
- **Key Skills:** Self-awareness, empathy, self-regulation and motivation are core components. Self-awareness means noticing your own feelings, triggers and patterns, and understanding how they affect your behaviour. Empathy is the ability to see situations from other people's perspectives and to respond with care, even when you disagree. Self-regulation is about managing your reactions—choosing how to respond rather than acting purely on impulse. Motivation includes staying engaged with your goals, finding meaning in your work and maintaining energy over time.
- **How It Translates to Workplace Success:** High EQ enables students to handle criticism with grace, manage stress under pressure, give constructive feedback and build positive, respectful relationships with colleagues and superiors. It helps them recognise when they need support and when others might need a listening ear or encouragement. People with strong EQ are often trusted as mediators and informal leaders because they help keep teams functioning even in difficult moments. In the long run, emotional intelligence supports both career progression and personal wellbeing, reducing the risk of burnout and conflict.

### 4. Leadership and Initiative

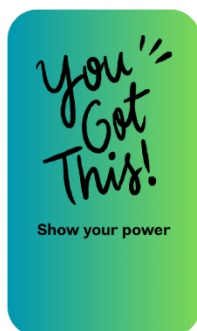
- **Why It's Important:** Leadership isn't just about managing teams, it's about inspiring and motivating others, taking responsibility and driving change. In an evolving field like game development, projects often require people who can see the bigger picture, propose new ideas and coordinate efforts without necessarily having formal authority. Leadership also includes everyday actions like stepping up to organise a meeting, supporting a struggling team-mate or advocating for more inclusive practices. Students who demonstrate leadership skills can help shape project directions, advocate for innovation and influence organisational culture.
- **Key Skills:** Vision, decision-making and mentorship are central elements. Vision involves having a sense of where a project or team could go and being able to communicate that direction in a way that others can understand and support. Decision-making is the ability to weigh options, consider risks and benefits, and choose a path forward—even when information is incomplete. Mentorship includes guiding and encouraging others, sharing knowledge and helping peers or juniors develop their skills and confidence.
- **How It Translates to Workplace Success:** Leadership skills empower students to take charge of projects, coordinate tasks and keep teams focused on shared goals. They learn to offer guidance to others, create environments where people feel safe to share ideas and promote positive cultural shifts in the workplace—for example, by championing inclusive practices or healthier approaches to workload. In many organisations, people who show initiative and leadership potential are more likely to be trusted with larger responsibilities, given opportunities to lead features or teams and invited into strategic discussions. Even without a formal title, these skills allow graduates to have a voice in shaping both the products they work on and the environments in which they work.



---

*Possible activities to perform, included in the toolkit:*

---



## Conclusions

This handbook has followed the journey that many girls and gender-diverse learners take when they move towards, through and beyond game development education. It has drawn on the NuGamers fact sheet, the voices of students, professionals and teachers, and the practical tools gathered in the NuGamers toolkit. Together, these resources paint a clear picture:

---

*the problem is not a lack of talent or interest among girls, but the presence of barriers that make it harder for them to see themselves in this field, to feel welcome in learning environments and to stay in the industry over time.*

---

We have seen how early experiences matter. The stories and data show that girls and women are already active, engaged players, often highly motivated by creativity, community, narrative and meaningful impact. When education and outreach highlight only narrow images of what “counts” as game development, many potential students simply do not recognise that what they love is already connected to this world. The strategies in Part 1 – and activities such as Showcasing, Serious Game Design and Discovering Careers in the Games Industry – are intended to open that door: to make the range of roles visible, to involve families, and to create first encounters with game education that feel inviting rather than intimidating.

Inside programmes, learning environments and teaching practices become decisive. Part 2 focused on the everyday culture of classrooms, studios and labs: who speaks, whose work is recognised, how conflict is handled, what is considered “normal”. Tools like co-designing a common agreement with the class, using Community Canvas, working with personas and running brave space activities are simple but powerful ways to reshape that culture. They remind us that inclusion is not a one-off workshop but a daily practice in how we design projects, give feedback, organise groups and respond when something goes wrong.

Part 3 looked at what happens when students step into the labour market and early career. Here, the focus shifts to confidence, negotiation, networks and soft skills. Activities such as Show Your Power, Gamebadge and

Negotiation are more than add-ons: they are ways of helping students recognise their own value, communicate it clearly and make informed decisions about work. They also support a broader aim of NuGamers: not only to help girls enter existing workplaces, but to equip them to participate in changing those workplaces for the better.

Across all parts, several threads repeat:

- **Visibility:** girls and gender-diverse learners need to see people like themselves in roles of responsibility and creativity.
- **Voice:** they need real influence over the projects they work on, the stories they tell and the ways they collaborate.
- **Support:** they need structures – peers, mentors, teachers, families– that back them up when they face bias, harassment or self-doubt.
- **Continuity:** they need this support from first contact with a programme through study, graduation and the first steps into work.

No single institution can solve every structural problem in the games industry. However, every Education provider can decide what happens in its own classrooms, corridors, Discord servers, labs and events. The actions described in this handbook are deliberately practical and adaptable. Some can be implemented quickly – revising an open day, introducing bias reflection into a project brief, piloting a toolkit activity in one class. Others involve long-term work – rethinking curricula, building mentoring structures, reviewing policies and gathering data on participation and progression.

We encourage you to start where you are, choose a focus and involve students from the beginning. Use the personas and fact sheet findings to check your assumptions. Test toolkit activities in small groups and let participants adapt them. Collect feedback and share what you learn with colleagues and partners. Over time, these incremental changes add up to a stronger, more inclusive culture in which more people can see a future for themselves in game development.

Finally, this handbook is not meant to be static. As your context, your cohorts and the industry evolve, the examples and activities here can be re-mixed, translated, expanded or replaced. The most important outcome is not that every step looks exactly like it does on these pages, but that more girls and gender-diverse learners feel:

---

*I belong here. My perspective matters. I can grow, contribute and stay.*

---

If this handbook, together with the NuGamers fact sheet and toolkit, helps you move even a little closer to that goal, it has done its job.

Published 2025 by Futuregames AB

Editor: Francesca Olivier

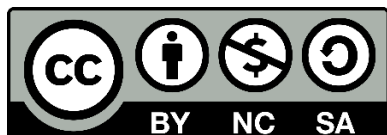
Authors: Francesca Olivier, Minna Porvari, Maja Šarić, Tommaso Sorichetti, Alessia Tripaldi, Dea Kralj, Costanza Panti

Partner institutions: Futuregames AB, Algebra University, All Digital, Sineglossa, XAMK (South Eastern Finland University for Applied Sciences)

Contact: Futuregames AB – [www.futuregames.se](http://www.futuregames.se)

The booklet was edited and published in the frame of the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership NuGamers Project n. 2023-1-SE01-KA220-VET-000155267

Last update: 01/12/2025



**Statement on the use of generative AI Tools in the document preparation:** In developing this document, we employed various generative AI tools, including ChatGPT, QuillBot, and Grammarly, to enhance sentence structure, grammar, and word choice. Recognizing the importance of not solely depending on AI-generated outputs, we meticulously reviewed all content to ensure accuracy, relevance, and alignment with the project's objectives. We implemented the following quality assurance measures: comprehensive review and validation, transparency in AI usage, intellectual property compliance, and acknowledgment of AI limitations. By adhering to these practices, we ensured that the AI-assisted sections of the proposal uphold the highest standards of accuracy, originality, and compliance.