

FLER

Learning by experiencing Escape Rooms: Financial Literacy for Adults

WP2-A2.1 Field research for identifying needs, challenges and problems
of adults in learning Financial Literacy

Executive Summary

2023



Field research for identifying needs, challenges, and problems of adults in learning Financial Literacy

The field research conducted had a primary objective of gaining a comprehensive understanding of the specific needs and challenges faced by adults from rural areas in relation to financial literacy. To achieve this, a well-structured methodology was implemented, which included the utilization of focus groups and interviews. These research techniques allowed for in-depth discussions and insights from various perspectives, including the target group of adults with low financial literacy, experts in adult education and training, financial literacy specialists, and associated partners. The initial activity, A2.1, was designed with the specific purpose of identifying the needs, difficulties, and issues related to financial literacy among adults living in rural areas. The focus groups and interviews served as a platform for participants to share their experiences, express their challenges, and discuss their understanding of financial literacy. These inputs formed the foundation for the subsequent steps in the research process and stimulate the design of a Virtual Escape Room, which would help improve literacy through gamification.

At the beginning of the focus meetings, participants completed a short questionnaire. The attained results indicated that the financial knowledge of the target group varied depending on the country and age of the participants. Nonetheless all focus group participants indicated the need to broaden their financial knowledge. Significantly in all countries (PL, ES, MT, PT, IT, EL, SE), gamification was evaluated as a valuable tool for enhancing understanding of financial topics. Below are the key conclusions derived from the focus group study conducted in 7 partner countries:

- The focus group research aimed to identify the needs and influential issues related to financial literacy among adults living in rural areas. The findings varied across countries, and included lack of awareness of financial fraud, the need to understand budgeting, outlining the need for emergency funds, implement understand of risk and planning for retirement or long-term savings.
- With reference to financial fraud, participants expressed that lacked awareness and identified the need to protect personal information when using digital platforms. Furthermore, in Malta and Portugal, interviewees outlined the need for increased awareness and education on financial fraud prevention. In Greece, Italy, Poland, and Spain, phishing scams and malware attacks were further identified as topics of interest.
- With reference to budgeting and emergency funds, partners noted the need for understanding of planning household budgets, counteract the inability to accumulate a financial cushion, improve on budgetary decisions, and the overall need to increase knowledge on the topic of budgeting and emergency funds.



- With reference to risk and reward, participants highlighted their preference for investing in business activities and their lack of knowledge about insurance providers /products, their concerns about bank branch closures and tax issues , and lack of confidence in the financial tools provided by banks.
- Other crucial concerns were planning for retirement or long-term savings. People interviewed showed apprehension about their future financial well-being in relation to investment products. For instance, they expressed interest in learning more about taxes related to their professional sphere or, more generally, in improving knowledge of how fiscal and monetary policy affected savings and profits.

With reference to interviews conducted with experts, these gathered information about the experts' recommendations, challenges, and opportunities for enhancing financial skills in adults coming from rural areas. The experts' opinions on the use of a Virtual Escape Room as a digital learning tool were outlined . Additionally, the research established connections with key stakeholders and experts who can , at a later stage, help support the project's exploitation and development. These findings include:

- Main financial matters lack proper awareness from low financial literate adults in rural areas: the identified topics included managing home budgets, investing, insurance, risk assessment, retirement planning, access to financial resources, and understanding financial institution documentation
- Recommendations to enable low financial literate adults to make sound decisions: Experts suggested training courses, the creation of educational service centres by local authorities, awareness about understanding financial documents, eliminating any digital divide by providing digital devices and internet access combined with financial and digital skills training.
- Challenges/problems low financial literate adults may encounter to enhance digital skills: The challenges outlined included low motivation, limited access to infrastructure and equipment, high costs, lack of teachers, and practicality in everyday life.
- Opportunities from enhancing digital skills for low financial literate adults: Experts have emphasized the potential advantages of improving digital skills for this group. These benefits include reducing digital exclusion, enabling access to financial knowledge and advisory services, fostering the use of digital financial instruments, and facilitating a better understanding of finance in business contexts.
- Finally, concerning the use of a Virtual Escape Room as a learning tool, the experts expressed a positive response and acknowledged the potential of this innovative approach in enhancing financial literacy among adults from rural areas. They suggested various digital approaches, such as mobile applications, online training, YouTube videos, social media, gamification, and virtual reality. They believed that gamification, including Virtual Escape Rooms, could help and encourage adults to increase financial knowledge and improve financial skills. They emphasized the importance of using digital approaches, including mobile apps, especially since many



people have access to a phone device but not a computer. There could be benefits in also offering face-to-face learning.

In conclusion, the field research conducted on the financial literacy needs and challenges of low financial literate adults from rural areas has yielded valuable insights. The experts believed that gamification, including the incorporation of a Virtual Escape Room, could play a pivotal role in motivating and encouraging adults to increase their financial knowledge and improve their financial skills. By making the learning experience interactive, immersive, and enjoyable, individuals are more likely to actively engage in the educational process and retain the information they acquire. The findings obtained through the research have shed light on the specific areas where adults in rural areas face difficulties in understanding and managing their finances. These insights will be instrumental in developing tailored educational content that addresses the identified needs and challenges. The Virtual Escape Room will leverage gamification techniques to enhance the financial literacy competencies of low financial literate adults. By immersing participants in a fun and challenging environment, the Escape Room will provide practical scenarios and problem-solving opportunities that encourage active learning and skill development.