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E LO SVILUPPO



ESCAPE RACISM

TOOLBOX TO PROMOTE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

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Playtesting Report

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Introduction

One of the most important tips shared during the LTTA of Escape racism project was: test, test, test!

Coherently with our proposal, we kept an eye on this important phase and we included the monitoring and data collection from the very beginning of it.

Thanks to the experience and the competencies of the consortium, we designed a few tools to collect insights and feedback, a short guideline that you can read [here](#).

Main points:

- **guidelines** to be used by the facilitator while running the tests
- **checklist** for the game designer as an on-paper support
- **feedback form** for the players after the game

Here are a few reasons why we think that testing (and playtesting) is very important and should not be skipped for any reason while developing a new tool, especially if it has educational purposes.

1. The activity was in your mind, then you put it in words and/or on paper, and finally, it becomes real! Each and every one of those steps were transforming the initial idea, but until you don't see it running, you cannot know how other people perceive and live it.
2. You might (and it is often the case) understand something about your own game that you didn't realize before looking at people playing it. This is a great learning moment for game designers.
3. You discover that the work you have done with such intense passion, a lot of time and resources...doesn't work for the purpose you had in mind. This might sound awful, but it is much better to uncover those black holes during the testing phase, than running a session with your target group and failing miserably.

In the following chapters, you can read about our tests.

We are always happy to receive comments, so, if you have, feel free to contact us.

Enjoy!



Victor's Story

Victor's Story is an educational escape room experience based around the subject of modern slavery, in particular the sub-topic of forced labour. The escape room centres around the tale of Victor, an educated family-oriented person enticed to the UK by modern slavers by the promise of a better life. He is subsequently held captive and forced to work for them in order to pay off a debt that they falsely claim he has incurred. The slavers threaten the lives of his family should he attempt to escape. The escape room uses puzzles and artifacts that the players must uncover and solve in order to tell the story of Victor's life prior to his forced indenture, his life as a modern slave, and eventual release.

Playtesting Victor's Story

The global Covid-19 pandemic and UK lockdown restrictions between March 2020 and July 2021 made playtesting of Victor's Story an exceptional challenge. The restrictions placed on working following this period have extended this timeframe. Playtesting therefore began on the 21st of September 2021 and has continued, when possible, until May 2022. In total, eight testing sessions took place, each utilising between 3 to 5 players. Sessions lasted 2 to 3 hours with additional time for preparation of the room, disassembly, and cleaning of the escape room kit. In total, twenty-nine people have experienced Victor's Story and supplied feedback as of 1st June 2022.

Playtest sessions typically began with welcoming the players and introducing them to the Coventry University staff who would be facilitating the game. After the introductions, the facilitators gave a brief explanation of the Escape Racism project, the escape room itself, and justification for the playtest. All of this helped to put the players at ease before they entered the escape room and given 45-minutes to uncover clues and solve the puzzles that would allow them to complete it. The majority of players achieved this goal within the allotted timeframe, whilst players who were close to completing the game awarded a few minutes of added time to do so. Once the game had ended, whether completed or not, the players were released from the room and debriefed about the experience. More information about the room, the puzzles it held, and the subject of modern slavery was provided. Players were then asked for feedback about the room and the information they gave was used as a resource to help modify and improve the game's quality. Finally, all of the players were asked to complete a short online survey consisting of 17 questions relating to the game's playability and content.

Survey Data Analysis

Of the players who responded to the online survey questions, over 50% had played a physical escape room prior to playtesting Victor's Story. The survey results therefore cover an almost perfect spectrum of players with experience and those who have never experienced an escape room before. It is surprising then that 78% of players completed the room within the allotted timeframe.

All players rated the enjoyment level of the game highly, with approximately 96% scoring it at 7 to 10 on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high). Similar ratings given for the game's learning experience, with a single player scoring learning as average (5), whilst 91% scored it within the 7 to 10 range.

The overall difficulty of the escape room was measured and ratings for this are more varied. 22% of players found the escape room easy whereas the remainder found the game hard, with average scores being 6 to 7. However, this contrasts with the completion rate of the room which shows it was more than possible to complete it within the given timeframe. This variation in experience may



be accounted for by changes made to the game, or the amount of aid given to players by the facilitating team.

With regards to facilitation, all players rated the information provided to them about the escape room as acceptable or above in quality, with 87% of players rating the information supplied as good or very good. Higher ratings were achieved when asked about how good the facilitators were at running the game, with 100% of respondents giving a good or very good rating. These ratings are mirrored when asked about the other information provided to the players about the subject matter, with all responses falling into the good or very good categories.

Written feedback relating to the difficulty of individual puzzles was also supplied, and this helped inform the modification of the gameplay experience. For example, the puzzle most often listed as the easiest involved retrieving the key to a lockbox from a vase full of water and bobby pins. However, few players considered the number of steps needed to actually collect the items needed to do this, which made the puzzle more complex than possible perceived. Additionally, as most players had rated the game was of above average difficulty, it was decided that making the game harder was not a desirable approach. Information about which puzzles players had found to difficult was therefore of more importance to us when balancing the game. Many players had noted that a puzzle which required them to decipher a code contained within a series of diary pages was too difficult. To make this easier, steps were taken. Initially the font used within the diary pages was altered to make the diary easier to read. This helped players to resolve the puzzle in all cases, however, the puzzle was still considered too hard. To alleviate this the code was changed slightly making the resolution easier to see, and finally an extra clue, simply a circled letter within the diary, was added to guide the players towards the solution.

In line with the findings listed above, 91% of those who took part in testing said that they would recommend the escape room to their friends and colleagues. The same number also said that they would play other escape rooms created by the Escape Racism project if they were given the chance. These numbers are very high and show the high quality of the room both as an object of fun and a learning experience.

The subject of playtesting games is one that is extremely familiar to us, however, the playtesting of a physical escape room is an entirely new experience. The initial design of the escape room was extremely methodological, identifying an area of concern and issues around it, researching the subject, understanding the victims, coming up with a story that reflects the subject's nature, and eventually fitting together a game with puzzles that fit into this framework that helped inform people about the subject matter.

Whilst the design of the game seemed to have been relatively well-formed at the close of the creation phase, playtesting has revealed subtleties which would otherwise have gone unnoticed and unremarked. This has allowed informed changes to be made, sometimes of a large scale, modifying a puzzle involving a diary and needing to recreate artifacts, and often of a small scale, highlighting a single letter or placing an 'x' on an object to draw users in. Often, these changes were made on-the-fly, allowing modifications to be made and the game retested 24-hours later to view their effect on gameplay. This ability to change and retest quickly has been invaluable to the creation process and has helped create a room which works not only for the players, but also the important subject matter it is meant to convey.



Fast Fashion

Fast Fashion is an educational virtual escape room (VER) experience based around the subject of modern slavery, specifically forced labour. The VER explores Navya's story, a young, aspiring fashion designer, who gets taken on to work within a garment factory that is a supply chain for a high street fast fashion company, although it is nothing like what she had expected. Over two months, Navya endures practices of forced labour, lack of worker's rights, poor working conditions, and sexual coercion, where she is paid as little as £3.50p per hour, which was the equivalent of €4,08 in 2020. The VER uses a series of puzzles and clues within 6 steps that players must decode and solve to move on to the next room steps and discover Navya's living situation, the illegal activities that have been inflicted on her in the factory and the post-modern slavery investigation conclusions.

Playtesting Fast Fashion

During the development of Fast Fashion, the COVID-19 pandemic had an enormous impact on the world, the United Kingdom enforced its first lockdown restrictions between March 2020 and July 2021. Due to this predicament, the development of Fast Fashion allowed the opportunity to form the game as a virtual escape room instead of a traditional escape room. Fast Fashion was created, tested, and piloted solely online from May 2021 until March 2022. There was one session where it was hosted as in-person hybrid facilitation. In total, eight testing sessions were conducted and utilised between 3 – 10 players with one or two groups synchronously. The online sessions lasted between 1 – 2 hours, with briefings, debriefings, and any open discussions that occurred. A total of 44 people tested and experienced Fast Fashion, and supplied feedback via the online survey dating back from 23rd July 2021.

The playtest sessions began with welcoming the players and introducing them to the Coventry University staff who would be facilitating the game. After the introductions, the facilitators gave a brief explanation of the Escape Racism project, the virtual escape room itself, the setup and objectives of the game, and any technical functions to consider during the playtesting. All of this helped to provide the players with a better insight into the game before they entered the virtual escape room, they were given 60-minutes to decode clues and solve the puzzles that would allow them to complete it. A moderate number of players achieved this goal within the allocated timeframe, whilst players who were close to completing the game were allowed extra time to complete the room they were in if they wanted it.

Once the game had ended, within the allocated timeframe or not, the players were debriefed about the experience. More information about the virtual escape room, the puzzles each room held, and the subject of modern slavery were provided. Players were then asked for feedback about the rooms and the information they gave was used as a resource to help modify and improve the game's quality. Finally, all players were asked to complete a short online survey consisting of 17 questions relating to the game's playability and content.

Survey Data Analysis

Of the players who responded to the online survey questions, only 21% had played a virtual/online escape room before playtesting Fast Fashion, and 64% of those who took the survey had experienced a physical escape room before participating in the playtesting.

The survey results cover a variable spectrum of players with previous experiences playing a physical and/or online escape room, indicating that physical escape rooms are still the most popular format in terms of gameplay. Whilst online escape rooms are still niche in practice, the game format does



not go unheard. It has been assessed that 50% of players completed the virtual escape room within the allocated timeframe of 60-minutes.

All players rated the enjoyment level of the game highly, with approximately 93% scoring it 7 to 10 on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high). Other results showed similar ratings for the game's learning experience, with 100% scoring it within the 7 to 10 range, the average score being 8.4.

The measurement of playability and difficulty demonstrated that it was, overall, a challenging game to play, with 14% of players finding the virtual escape room reasonable to play, whereas 86% found the game hard based on ratings given between 7 to 10, the average score being 8.07. Furthermore, this contrasts with the room completion rate, showing it was possible to complete it within the given timeframe. This variation in experience may be accounted for by changes made to the game; or the amount of aid given to players by facilitators.

Qualitative feedback was captured regarding the difficulty of individual puzzles through the timescale of playtesting; some of these comments were reviewed and helped to make specific modifications to improve the overall gameplay experience, whilst others pointed out how some of the puzzles were easy to decipher. For example, the most listed puzzle to be outlined as the easiest to solve was the emoji chart decipher in room 2.

Impressions of the other puzzles proved to be challenging at times, many players had noted that the puzzle which required them to decipher a code contained within a hexadecimal equation was too hard, however, one respondent highlighted that it was the easier puzzle when completing the survey. This could be refined down to several factors, specifically more towards age groups, fields of practice and education, but this data was not collected during the survey, so it cannot act as reliable data.

To make the hexadecimal puzzle easier, a couple of digital artefacts were curated to help describe to the players how to solve the puzzle. The additional artefacts helped players grasp what they were looking for within the puzzles and clues and explore diverse ways to solve the final puzzle; however, the hexadecimal equation was still the hardest puzzle to solve, with 57% of respondents agreeing. To rectify this issue, additional information was added to the guidebook for facilitators to review and apply into the gameplay. The defining clue which was listed could allow players can compare the total in each pay slip provided in room 3, and subtract them from each other to get the password to finish the VER.

Some comments shared a common factor, the undesired impression of making the game harder, as particular aspects of the online functionality and setup were difficult for players to navigate. For instance, the password system and chosen cloud storage drive platform were tricky for players to operate, despite already having some adaptations made from previous feedback.

Regarding facilitation, all players rated the information provided about the virtual escape room as acceptable or above in quality, with 86% rating the information supplied as good or very good. The highest ratings were achieved when asked about how good the facilitators were at running the playtest, with 100% of respondents giving a good or very good rating.

Ultimately, the ratings within this section asked about the other information provided to the players about the subject matter; another 100% of responses consisted within the good or the very good categories.

From those who took part in the playtesting and survey, 86% of respondents said that they would recommend the escape room to their friends and colleagues, whilst 79% said that they would play other escape rooms created by the Escape Racism project if the opportunity was available.



These numbers are significant and demonstrate the high quality of the virtual escape room both as an object of playfulness and a learning experience. Being able to gather more research data on the learning experiences and the format of the virtual escape room has been beneficial, considering this is the first time one has been designed and implemented into an external project. Like the physical escape room, the initial design of the virtual escape room took a methodological approach. The game consisted of examining and identifying an area of concern and issues around it, researching the subject, understanding the victims, and producing a story that reflects the subject's nature. Other aspects explored were the representations of empathy in the narrative structure and collating a game with puzzles to fit within the framework to help teach and inform people on the subject matter.

Escape Disabware

"Escape Disabware" takes place in two rooms, the first leads to the second one. In it, you find yourself in a dystopic future in which technology has become part of the human body, now controlled by an Artificial Intelligence (M.A.I.), which as a result of the Disabware virus people who fail to update are separated from society.

General feedback

We tested the Escape Room on two different occasions:

Test 1: June 2021 in Valladolid.. Three groups - 11 people involved in total.

Test 2: August 2021 in Cubillos del Sil. Five groups - 22 people involved in total.

The general feeling that we got from the players was that they had a good time during the game and that they got to reflect about the topics afterwards, during the debriefing. Some of the players were young people with disabilities, and they expressed the satisfaction of having an opportunity to do this kind of leisure activities adapted to them.

The pilot testing was very useful for us as designers, because we were able to see what puzzles were too difficult or too confusing, and especially the decorations and scenography. We also saw that the background story and environment was very attractive to the participants.

Results of the questionnaire

The big majority of the participants indicated that they had a good experience and that they would definitely recommend it to their friends or colleagues.

About what they had learnt, most of them mentioned attitudes like tolerance, respect, diversity, empathy with social barriers and discrimination. Some of them also mentioned group dynamics, such as cooperation and communication. In the possible improvements, there were some interesting suggestions as visual and hearing puzzles, to create empathy with those kind of disabilities, or to turn limitations into opportunities inside the game. They also indicated that the topic of disability could be more present in the game.

Some of them expressed this could be used in a formal education environment, to teach about discrimination and diversity in the schools.



Possible changes

In this scenario, we found that the chain of puzzles was too long and it was pretty difficult to finish the game on time, so we eliminated two of the puzzles and simplified others, giving more clues to solve them. We also rated the game as “difficult”, in comparison to the second scenario. We also found that the scenography was lacking elements to create the futuristic environment that we were trying to create, so after the testing phase we bought some new materials: some silver plastics that we hung off the walls and more police-like tape.

Overall impression of the playtests

As a team, we felt very grateful for the experience. It was the first time we did a big-scale escape room, and the result was very satisfactory. The players showed interest in the topic and they seemed that they had enjoyed the experience, so we could say we had a successful pilot testing. We learned a lot about game designing and facilitating, so we take those learnings for the future. In our organization, we have played this escape rooms in different activities and events and we have designed new escape rooms with the knowledge that we got from this project.

El Jardín de la Hespérides

This game is divided into two rooms. In the first one, you find the Hespérides. three mythological Greek nymphs, have locked and hidden several objects in their special garden, the Garden of the Hespérides. They consider that these objects are threatening to destabilize the normative world, which they want to protect. The objects are the most powerful weapon for inclusion, the objects that are able to make the world more accessible to everyone.

General feedback

We tested the Escape Room on two different occasions:

Test 1: June 2021 in Valladolid. Four groups - 14 people involved in total.

Test 2: August 2021 in Cubillos del Sil. Three groups - 9 people involved in total.

The general atmosphere was very relaxed and interesting. The players seemed happy and curious to discover all the objects they were supposed to liberate. During the debriefing, they expressed their curiosity and they were glad to have learnt these new tools. They had a good time.

We were very satisfied with the test, as it was useful to see how we could improve the materials, the puzzles and the scenography.

Results of the questionnaire

The big majority of the participants indicated that they had a good experience and that they would definitely recommend it to their friends or colleagues about what they had learnt, most of them



mentioned attitudes like tolerance, respect, diversity, empathy with social barriers and discrimination. Some of them also mentioned group dynamics, such as cooperation and communication. In the possible improvements, there were some interesting suggestions as visual and hearing puzzles, to create empathy with those kind of disabilities, or to turn limitations into opportunities inside the game. They also indicated that the topic of disability could be more present in the game. Some of them expressed this could be used in a formal education environment, to teach about discrimination and diversity in the schools.

Possible changes

In this scenario, we found that the story was difficult to understand at first, so we introduced more explanations about this in the second test. However, it generated a very interesting debate afterwards, about this “normative world” and why would anyone want to hide those objects of accessibility. Some of the puzzles needed some support from the facilitators, so we also improved this. Finally, the most important change was with the scenography, as we wanted to create a very mystic and natural environment, as if the players were actually in the magical garden. We added different materials as decorations that helped to create that environment in the following sessions.

Overall impression of the playtests

As a team, we felt very grateful for the experience. It was the first time we did a big-scale escape room, and the result was very satisfactory. The players showed interest in the topic and they seemed that they had enjoyed the experience, so we could say we had a successful pilot testing. We learned a lot about game designing and facilitating, so we take those learnings for the future. In our organization, we have played this escape rooms in different activities and events and we have designed new escape rooms with the knowledge that we got from this project.

Guilty? The last word to you!

“Guilty? The last word to you!” scenario is settled in a dystopian future in Sicily.

Participants role a group of judges within a very secret room, where they will find information about the fact for which they are called to take a sentence. The judges will not leave the room until they won't take the final judgement.

General feedback

CEIPES Tested this scenario in different moments between September and October 2021 with the two main target groups:

- Youngsters 6 groups in 3 days 22 people October 2021
- Youth workers 3 groups, 8 people September 2021

After the very first moment of excitement, players started to be fully engaged with the puzzles to solve them in time. They worked together, using the specific abilities of each member of the team, by implementing their teamwork and time management skills. Once outside the room, they were



more cohesive as a group. Furthermore, they expressed a general interest in the topic of discrimination. The test was really useful for us, to find what does not work in the game flow, the puzzle's level of difficulty, and which were the parts of the storyline needed to be reviewed.

Results of the questionnaire

Most of the participants had never played an escape room before, although players soon entered the dynamics of the game and a good part of the tests ended with the resolution of the final game within the time established.

They found the experience amusing evaluating it with an average not lower than 7 to 10 on a scale from 1 to 10.

They also positively evaluated it as a learning experience, indeed, participants reported that the escape room helped them to become more aware of stereotypes and prejudices prevailing in our society, to reflect on the sociological level, and to understand better the mechanisms and the logic behind the construction of a path of puzzles oriented to an end goal. About the facilitator's work, they were satisfied or very satisfied with the clarity of information provided before, the explanation of the rules, the management of the game, and the final reflection and explanation during the debriefing.

In conclusion, they gave positive feedback, evaluating the experience as very interesting and inspiring because it was both fun and constructive, giving possibilities and ideas to reflect on. They affirmed that would like to repeat the experience and that they for sure will recommend it to their friends and colleagues.

Possible changes

Initially, players focused more on finding codes than on the meaning of the games, so we decided to give more weight to Lucas's story through a more detailed diary, that people appreciated because it is a very useful device to put yourself in the shoes of the other and to be projected within the narrative line. Furthermore, we decided to introduce an hint to suggest to use water in the vase game, because many times players get stuck, so we replaced the bottle of water with watering can.

Overall impression of the playtests

CEIPES works for a long time in the field of gamification and the use of game dynamics as a valuable methodology of non-formal education, but thanks to Escape Racism and our partners specialized in this methodology, we experienced and learnt this unique and useful practice. It was challenging to build the game structure and connect the puzzles all together to merge them to the story behind and the important topics. The creative and fun environment inspired us to produce an amazing experience for users and looking for their feedback it seems that we centered the objective. One of our best achievements was the creation of the permeant escape room inside our organisation facilities, always ready to be played by our stakeholders. We wish besides, to implement and create new scenarios, once gained this important knowledge.



Exodus through the space

"Exodus through the space" is set in a dystopic future where the eruption of a huge volcano puts the Earth in danger and all human beings have to leave planet earth.

The room is divided in two areas through a rope, the first room represents planet earth where players have to find the right way to travel to the safe planet. Once they find the key to the second room, players will be inside the center of identification of the planet WHAKAORANGA, where from a window with bars it is possible to see the earth and other planets. Inside this room they must pass several tests to gain citizenship.

General feedback

CEIPES Tested this scenario in different moment between November 2021 and March 2022 with the two main target group:

- Youngsters 5 groups in 2 days of 20 people, in March 2022
- Youth workers 4 groups 10 external people in November 2021, February and March 2022

In a playful mood, people took actively part in the narrative of discrimination and racism of Exodus through the space, trying to solve quizzes and reflecting, at the same time, on these important topics. During the game, they supported each other a lot, in a peaceful collaboration without conflicts. In general, the test was really useful for us, to find what does not work in the game flow, the puzzle's level of difficulty, and which parts of the storyline needed to be reviewed.

Results of the questionnaire

Even if a huge part of the participants had already played an escape room before, many of the groups were not able to finish the escape room test within the given time. However, they immediately role-played the game and its narrative, and they found it difficult to solve. They appreciated the experience, defining it as amusing and evaluating it with an average not lower than 6 to 10 on a scale from 1 to 10. They also positively evaluated it as a learning experience, indeed, participants reported that it was fun and educational at the same time. Playing the game allows them to reflect on various issues such as discrimination and the senselessness of racism and the difference between the power of passports.

About the facilitator's work, they were satisfied or very satisfied with the clarity of information provided before, the explanation of the rules, the management of the game, and the final reflection and explanation during the debriefing.

In conclusion, they gave positive feedback, evaluating the experience as very interesting and inspiring because it was both fun and constructive, giving possibilities and ideas to reflect on. They affirmed that would like to repeat the experience and that they for sure will recommend it to their friends and colleagues.

Possible changes

Players often raised the issue that the link between topic, narration, and the game activities should be closer. Thus, we decided to follow the suggestion and added a narrative introduction to the game, where facilitators can make participants fall into the role from the beginning of the game.



Overall impression of the playtests

CEIPES works for a long time in the field of gamification and the use of game dynamics as a valuable methodology of non-formal education, but thanks to Escape Racism and our partners specialized in this methodology, we experienced and learnt this unique and useful practice. It was challenging to build the game structure and connect the puzzles all together to merge them to the story behind and the important topics. The creative and fun environment inspired us to produce an amazing experience for users and looking for their feedback it seems that we centered the objective. One of our best achievements was the creation of the permanent escape room inside our organization facilities, always ready to be played by our stakeholders. We wish to implement and create new scenarios, once gained this important knowledge.

Fight Racism

Horseless chariots, airplanes, supersonic jets and interplanetary rockets. We have exceeded all limits imposed by nature, broken down the sound barrier and almost equaled the speed of light! The famous world tour in 80 days can now be done in 45 minutes. The group is invited to prove it, but they will face unexpected challenges about borders, passports and migration issues.

General feedback

The game is challenging but can be adjusted easily according to the group and the expertise of the players: the facilitator can observe the first phases and define how much to speed it up.

The testers were very mixed in terms of age range, cultural backgrounds and previous experiences with escape rooms, so that gave us a good range of feedback and perspectives. The room is divided in two parts: the first one has a happy mood and the second is more thrilling and emotional. This is not good or bad per se, but has to be taken into consideration during the debriefing because the players might not expect such a change and may feel lost.

Results of the questionnaire

We had 43 people playing, satisfied by the experience, even though not every person involved considered themselves "happy". Few of them expressed their concern about the topic, saying that the game is a very strong experience and they felt almost overwhelmed by the emotions (someone was moved to tears). So the experience worked, but happiness was not the main emotion highlighted, in line with the design. 75% of the players rated the experience as fun and challenging; 2 out of 3 were saying that they learned something new and had some deep reflections about the topics proposed.

The game of the dance was unanimously voted as the most difficult one, proved from the fact that not a single group could solve it without a hint.

Possible changes



Story: it seems a good decision not to say anything about the real challenge, but to keep the explorer/adventure mood.

Scenography: print and play games will be substituted in their final form by proper maps. Mannequins are great scenography elements, but they are expensive. In case of low budget they could be replaced by simple chairs with clothes hanging on them.

Music: it is a great idea to use music and sound effects during specific phases (eg. decision time or passport choice to put pressure on the group).

Games and puzzles: the dance game has to be simplified. We need to build a turnstile, it might be challenging, but buying it is impossible (800+ euros).

Overall impression of the playtests

People and games talking about life challenging issues, like illegally crossing borders, need to be careful. The topic is hot at the political level and it is very easy to manipulate or to be manipulated. That's why we decided to involve first hand witnesses and to talk with them about their stories, details, things we can publish and things we better don't. The second stage of tests with the real life stories were much more intense and impacting on the participants.

No borders

The room is furnished like the interior of an old Berlin house, where no one has set foot for more than ten years. A bed, a bedside table, an old wardrobe, some hidden objects. Players will step back into the past and reconstruct together the history of the Berlin Wall and the walls that still divide parts of the world.

General feedback

Test with interesting developments and heterogeneous approaches. In general, the room is perceived as a place for an intimate journey, right from the start it is proposed as a slow and very narrative path with an emotionally engaging ending. Having to read many texts or stop to listen to audio and songs "forces" the group to stop and reflect on what is happening, taking the time to proceed calmly. This, in general, is instead a bit limiting for those who approach the escape room with the sole aim of winning and finishing in the fastest possible time. The experience is divided into two parts, one before opening the wardrobe and one after, and this detachment is perceived as evident: opening the cabinet is usually a cause of surprise because it is not expected to contain so much material. Smaller groups (2-3 people) are generally more suitable for this escape room.

Results of the questionnaire

We had 44 people playing, mostly satisfied by the experience and happy to support the process of improving a draft of the game. The most difficult puzzle is the one referred to the calendar, not for the game itself but for the unclarity of the instructions given.



The playtesters found it useful to be able to put their opinions in writing and it was effective for us to have a set of written data to refer to during the iteration phases. However, some questions within the test are out of place. For example, asking if an experience was "fun" after having people play for an abundant hour on heavy and sad issues such as the forced divisions of peoples is misleading and useless for the purpose of understanding the emotional state. It would also have been more useful to have the possibility of an emotional feedback just as the first question, for example "what are the emotions that this experience aroused in you?".

Possible changes

Story: make the initial test more immersive and resume it at the end of the escape room in some way.

Scenography: certainly there are many objects that could be added to make the room more realistic and immersive; some, moreover, like the furniture, would need to be changed or made to measure.

Games and puzzles: the calendar game is more customizable, you might find a padlock with more significant numbers.

Overall impression of the playtests

"Think easy" is the first possible answer to this question. The games must be built in a simple way and eventually complicated, never the other way around. A general reflection is also possible on materials: even if simple and fragile materials, such as paper, are acceptable in a prototype phase, they are to be excluded during playtests or are ruined by those who play. A small investment in the quality of the objects can have great results. Even more generally, I think it would be interesting in the future to hypothesize to divide the playtesters into categories ("gamers", "families", "educators", "social activists" ...) based on the presumed way they have of living a ' experience and to play, so as to be able to exploit their characteristics to give each playtest a different objective and not to create groups that are too inhomogeneous between them.

Janka's Story

Our story's main character is Janka, a high school student, who is a very talented, but less popular girl. She has very good grades in almost every subject, and she is also a member of the school's volleyball team. Her best and only friend is Petra, they do everything together. In the last days, Janka's mom found out that not only did her grades start to get worse, but she also missed a couple of training sessions in the volleyball team as well. When we enter her room, we receive a very angry phone call from Petra, in which she basically breaks up with Janka because of what she has done. From here, we must find out the story behind Janka's downfall and try to figure out what happened between Janka and Petra.

General feedback

After we finished the creation of our first actual escape room, we started the testing phase, which happened between July 2021 and March 2022. During this period, 15 groups (60 youngsters, 15



youth workers and teachers) attend the room to try out the puzzles created by the project team of Támaszpont MOPKA.

Despite our original plan, we had to change the escape room's location from our Youth Center to ensure the game's sustainability. Unfortunately, the location also affected the number of participants who can play simultaneously, because the new place is not big enough for at least ten youngsters as we planned. Also, it requires some walking from the Youth Center, which takes more time than expected.

In the Youth Center, we usually host classes from the closest elementary school for diverse workshops. The practice is that the whole class comes simultaneously for technical and practical reasons. Because of the limitation of participants, we created a "circle of process" to ensure each participant could try the room equally and we still could fit within the time frame we planned. Fortunately, three of us worked on the project, so meanwhile, one of us (our Drama Educator) accompanied a group in the room, one of us had a chance to walk with the groups between the room and the Youth Center, and a 3rd of us could make sure the participants already tried the game filled out the evaluation questionnaire. This process went very well and saved us some time for the debriefing at the end.

Most of the participants liked the room and the puzzles. They were involved during the game. We found the whole process very useful. The participants gave us insights and ideas about how we can develop our game to make it more engaging and understandable. The atmosphere was emotional and inspiring during the whole process.

Results of the questionnaire

According to the questionnaire, most of the time, our participants were satisfied with the game. Although they highlighted some things that could be improved, more importantly, we had a chance to talk about the phenomenon of bullying. In our opinion, the debriefing was more effective regarding the opinion of the youngsters. As you can see from the questionnaire result, the written answers are general, like "It was joyful" or "Next time, it should be a bit easier/harder to solve the puzzles." However, many personal stories came out when they had a chance to share their opinion on the topic face to face. We had many deep conversations that we think can cause a fundamental change in their life, never mind if they were bullied, bullied or just passive audiences. At the beginning of the testing, we had a chance to try the room out with a group of youngsters with lower opportunities. Despite (or because) of the similarities of their life in their closed community, a lot of bullying happens, so it was so interesting to discuss it with them. Also, the girls from the group were delighted because of the "fancy room", the dresses and the makeup we put into the room as a decoration of a "regular teenage girl's room".

Possible changes

The testing phase caused two main differences which came from each other. According to the original story, nothing wrong happens with Janka. However, her best friend (Petra) is mad at her. The youngsters pointed out that they were slightly disappointed at the end because they expected something more intense. Based on this feedback, we decided to change the end of the story. Janka is lost, and the players have to figure out not just what happened before her loss but also find her and help her reconcile with Petra.



Overall impression of the playtests

We shouldn't be afraid to create more intense content because youngsters nowadays have a higher stimulus threshold, so more intense content helps them become more aware and engaged.

I need a hero

We are citizens of an imaginary nation, who are destined to save their Country. A vicious and scary nation, the Vigroces are trying to destroy us! Or are they? In this outside Escapes room, we are going on an adventure, executing hard and tiring exercises, whilst learning more and more about the strange nation, we thought are the enemy.

General feedback

In the first period of the testing, we have been in close cooperation with the local schools, who have sent us both students and teachers, to test the escape room. 3 whole classes (around 20 students and 2 teachers each) completed the room in this period, and the feedback from them was very positive. We used the same schedule, as in the first room, and created a circle of programs, so that the group, who is not on the tour yet, or have already arrived, wouldn't get bored. On the tasks of the room, we received kind of mixed feedback, some found them too easy, some found them too hard, but mostly they were satisfied with them. The same situation occurred with the length, some said too long, some said too short.

As the testing was successful, we decided, that we will open the treasure hunt/ outdoor escape room for public, so that anyone with a smartphone will be able to participate. As a result, more than 200 players have completed the trip between May 28, 2021 and April 22, 2022. The general feedback from there was that everybody loved it, it still has a 5-star overall rating in the application.

Results of the questionnaire

The feedback we received in the questionnaires have been very similar to the ones we have heard from the participants in person. Most of the time, they liked everything, and had a very positive overall experience. It was a common answer, that they felt the trip was a bit long, before we arrived back to the start, however, they did not think it was too exhausting. There was one task that was a bit difficult, so later we decided to add help options for that one. We have also had a lot of general answers, like „it was good“, „I liked it“ etc. Most of the participants stated that they would like to try something similar in the future. The only bad comments were on the QR- codes, which had malfunctioned sometimes, and were hard to scan on too bright days.

Possible changes

Some simple practical things, like the placement of the QR-codes (more shadowy places,), and the drawing equipment had been changed, but other than that, due to the very positive feedback, we did not change a lot about our outdoor escape room.



Overall impression of the playtests

Because of the positive feedback, from both the testing and public audience, We are planning to continue on the operation of this outdoor escape room, and we also considered expanding our portfolio with a new one, that will be for a bit older target audience, and will be oriented around diamond theft.