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ESCAPE RACISM

TOOLBOX TO PROMOTE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

PROJECT NUMBER: 2019-2-IT03-KA205-016906



DISRUPTIVE
MEDIA
LEARNING LAB





Material elaborated in the scope of the project
“Escape Racism - Toolbox to promote inclusive communities”

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



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Introduction

The aim of this document is to provide support for the facilitators and the game designer during the pilot phase, while testing the educational escape rooms.

You drafted the story and the flow chart, the puzzles were on paper and now you crafted a 3D version, the excitement is high! You now need to involve people to play the game and to see if it really works.

To support this sensitive process, we designed a short guide with light and flexible tools that you might find useful. Feel free to adapt them to your context and to improve the proposal in any way.

We would very much appreciate it if you can give us any feedback, by writing @...

The document has two main parts:

1. the **guidelines** are intended to be used by the facilitator/observer while running the test. As it is very complex to keep track of everything that happens during a test, a short guide where to take notes, is rather useful;
2. the **checklist** is an on paper support (you can have it online, but we won't go for that, it's less practical) to note down the different aspects of the game. It is mainly for the game designers that will work on further implementation of the game.

Note: despite the great efforts made in the previous phases, it often happens that during the test you will be required to adapt, modify or drastically change your activity.

Try to approach this phase with serenity and open mind: high achievements require time and changes; it is perfectly fine to fail, it is part of the game.

Important note: try not to stick with your previous ideas, they could be great but not applicable in reality. Keep the good spirit, but remember your final goal, if you don't get there, it's not worth it.

Very important note: fail fast, change, test, iterate.

It's a pilot phase, you are supposed to test a certain number of times to reach a satisfactory and viable product. There is no need to be shining and polish at the very beginning, nor to spend days on a specific puzzle, that might change the week after.

Very very important note: you got it, right?



Activity definition

The pilot phase, also called the test phase, requires scientific approach and care. As a designer, you want to understand what is working and what is not and how you can change for the best. It's not the time for self esteem, compliments and false friends.

Scientific approach

1. Try to reproduce the same conditions in the environment. This will help to have comparable results.
Imagine a group playing in the morning and the next one after 8 hours of intense activity, they will probably have a very different approach and the level of their energy might influence the test significantly.
2. Do not evaluate everything all together. It is easier to focus on specific aspects of the game and to change them to see the results. If you change too many variables, it will be difficult to understand which was the pivotal one and how much you have to modify.
If from the first test we got a “too slow” feedback, but in the following one we are reducing the number of the puzzles, including 3 more people and giving hints more frequently, which one is the “right” one?
3. The facilitators cannot always be the same? Use a grid to be sure that their observations are following the same pattern.
4. Do trust in numbers! If one group has troubles with one puzzle, it might be by chance. If 5 groups are having the same issue, you'd better change something there.

Care

1. Be careful about the way you ask, because you might bring bias on the participants.
Example: do you think that button is too big? Better one: did you notice some out-of-size element? Even better: reduce the size of the button and see if they reach it anyway.
2. Be aware of each one's inner bias.
We all come with prejudices, automatic replies and cultural biases. It is part of the human kind. This is not necessarily a problem, but if you know or notice that some answers are driven by bias, try to explore it further or to test the same aspect with people that differ for that specific detail.
Example: men are generally less attentive to colours than women. If you are testing some colour code combination, be sure that you verify it with both genders.
3. Be careful with silence.
The players might take for granted some elements or be too shy to express themselves. A good facilitator always gives room to comments and positive reinforcement, so as to create a relaxed and confidential atmosphere. Another good one ends the debriefing phase with an anonymous questionnaire.



WHO - Each escape room should be tested with (at least!) 30 young people and 10 youth workers. As the target groups are different, so the observations should be.

HOW MANY – if you designed the activity for small groups, involve from 3 to 5 people; 12-15 if you go for a bigger number.

HOW MANY 2 - the more, the better. Test each scenario at least with 10 groups.

HOW LONG – Each test should take into consideration an extra time beside the game itself: to the usual activity of 60', add an introduction about the pilot phase (5'), a final part where you have the discussion, the context and some time for personal evaluation through questionnaire.

Two hours should be ok.

HOW LONG 2 - There is no limit to the test phase, but 2 months is a good period to have it done properly.

WHEN – the pilot phase would last around five months, between July and November 2021.



Guidelines

What to observe during the game and the debriefing?

This section aims to show to the educators and facilitators what to observe during the game and the debriefing to verify if the goal of the escape room is reached.

The goal of the educational escape rooms is mainly focused to lead the participants to reflect on certain topics during the game. The Escape Racism project is addressed to young people, so it is even more important to combine the fun of the game with raising awareness of the theme chosen for the escape room experience.

In the scope of the project, the general theme is focused on fighting discriminations in its different form and for this reason five awareness raising topics were chosen: racism, disability, bullying, modern slavery and borders. The objective is therefore to observe whether the game path created in the 10 scenarios (two for each theme) is useful in bringing the young participants to broaden their awareness of the theme of the scenario being tested and in which way they feel to act to fight against the discriminations.

During the game:

The scenarios created recall the theme, in a way that is sometimes clear, sometimes less, through direct or indirect references (text images, pictures, etc.), the personality of the characters or the dynamics of the game itself.

The facilitator should bear in mind that during the game the participants will be mainly involved in solving riddles. It is, however, good to observe if the participants grasp the references to the theme through their comments, reflections (usually fast due to the rush to finish the game) and dialogues to solve the puzzles.

Surely there are puzzles or clues that are more explicit and for which a reaction is expected. It may be useful to be attentive and take notes of any comments/keywords used by the participants during the game and use them for the debriefing phase where there will be time to investigate. The facilitator should also pay attention to any behaviour of the players, such as particular reactions during the game or expression, that could be involuntary reactions to some puzzles or words used in the scenario.

During the debriefing

Starting from what emerged during the game, the facilitator will lead the debriefing.

This part is essential to underline the educational aspects of the escape room. During the game phase the facilitator will have noted some significant words, comments, reactions of the participants. Taking a cue from what happened, the meaning of this phase is to lead the participants to think about the meaning of the lived experience.



There may have been players who have been more attentive to the meaning of the game or the texts / images used and others less. The facilitator will start with the “more aware” people to bring the other members of the group to reflect on what they have experienced.

During the debriefing the facilitator will observe if the players spontaneously report some specific feelings or comments relating to the experience, otherwise he/she will lead this part.

- Depending on the scenario structure:

Each scenario contains elements that are symbolically important, expressly inserted for this crucial phase of the debriefing.

The scenario could have *parallels* between some parts of the game such as its storytelling, and reality. If none of the players show to be aware of the elements that can be actually traced back to what people are experiencing in today's society, the facilitator will ask the participants if that particular game or that particular element of the story has led them to think about something real.

The scenario may require participants to experience a *role play*. This will lead them to take on the role of other people, and this may lead them to identify and experience emotions. In this case, the facilitator will ask the participants how they felt in having taken on the role of that specific figure and how they would have acted instead. It is very important to try to make the participants realize which elements present in the scenarios are attributable to reality.

Once these have been identified by the group, it would be desirable to carry out a brief comparison on how they manage or face moments of discrimination in their daily lives.

Some leading questions:

- *How would you act if this would happen to you? Or to a friend?*
- *Do you think that our society is doing enough to avoid episodes of discriminations?*
- *Did you notice some parallels within the game and the reality?*
- *How did you feel during the game? (or some specific/meaningful moment)*
- *Do you think that this experience helped you in raising awareness about the topic xxx and discrimination?*

At the end of the discussion, the facilitator will observe if the participants actually felt motivated to deepen the proposed topic or if the comparison led them to think about some aspect for the first time.

Sensitive issues could be touched on, so the facilitator must be very careful to keep the dialogue respectful and manage any different point of view.



Debriefing after the game

Overall objective: Let respondents reflect and formulate the key take-away after the exercise.

Debrief setup:

The training usually consists of 4 parts and take around 90-150 minutes depending on the number, the age, and the situation of the participants:

1. Warming up, which should be no more than 5-10 minutes. Use exercises that help respondents focus on the experience/topic, build a trusting atmosphere, and the respondents get to know each other a bit more. Clarify basic rules (no wrong answers, respect each other, etc.).
2. Discuss what happened in the room: you should consider exercises that support participants to reflect on the experience in the room and start opening up in front of others. Use open-ended questions that make them think on what they went through. things worth talking about or other methods of self-expression, open-ended questions, etc.
3. This is where you should go deep into the topic. You should spend at least 30-40 minutes with intensive discussions. Let them debate between each other, while respecting the basic rules. You can ask provoking questions here. In case one side seems to be more dominant, you may consider asking questions that make the dominant side think about the other side's arguments as well.
4. Final evaluation, which should be approximately 15-20 minutes. Respondents should summarize what they heard /learnt and they should draw conclusions. Ask them how they could apply today's experience into their lives.

What to do and what not to do:

During the training use open-ended questions. Examples for open questions:

- How do you feel now?
- What happend with you in the room?
- What did you do to escape?

Facilitators need to know that they are not leaders, but helpers, who empower the participants, who calm the players if the situation requires.

Create an open atmosphere, a psychologically safe place.

Focus on the overall objectives: learning, information sharing, self-reflection, sensitization, creating empathy towards the topic and each other, create a connection with the topic.

Meanwhile pay attention to the group-dynamics, react to the situations, since the objectives can be met in many different ways.



You may consider different types of processing techniques, not only discussions. Some non-formal techniques/games may be helpful to guide them through the experience. We recommend the following techniques:

- Get to know techniques
- Trust development techniques
- Time fill techniques
- Communication methods
- Analytical methods
- Problem solving / development methods
- Conflict resolution methods.

There are some games/tasks without objects, that require only participation. However, in case of most games/tasks you will need a few small things.

The games/tasks should be tailored to the specificity of the audience: e.g. do not ask teenagers to saw, a tennis ball may suit them better.

The location of the training also determines what activities you can prepare, please be mindful of that.

You may want to consider creating a basic “training package” over time.

What could be in such basic training package?

- A4 sheets (usually a package containing 500 sheets)
- Simple ball-point pens
- Coloured felt pens (a pack of 12-20 pieces)
- Flipchart paper (2-3 sheets)
- Post-its of different colours and sizes
- Scissors (1 bigger minimum)
- Old magazines
- A box of matches (for getting-to-know and warm-up exercises)
- Some stress balls or tennis ball
- Blue tack
- Dixit cards can be very insightful



Questionnaire

Some participants always prefer to speak after the experience, but others tend to be more reflective or less talkative. A good option to make sure you are not missing any important comment, is to propose an anonymous questionnaire. Here you can find what we proposed during the testing phase:

Question 1. Which escape room did you play?

- Blank Field (100 Characters)

Question 2. Have you ever played a **physical** escape room experience before?

1. No
2. Yes

Question 3. Have you ever played an **online** escape room experience before?

1. No
2. Yes

Question 4. If you were playing against the clock, did your team complete the escape room within the allotted time?

1. No
2. Yes

Question 5. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is low and 10 is high, how would you rate the **enjoyment level** of the escape room you played?

- 1 – 10 Scale

Question 6. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is low and 10 is high, how would you rate the **learning experience** of the escape room you played?

- 1 – 10 Scale

Question 7. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is easy and 10 is hard, how would you rate the escape room's **difficulty level** overall?

- 1 – 10 Scale

Question 8. In your opinion, which of the escape rooms puzzles did you find the **easiest** to solve? Please describe the puzzle or list items which were utilised within it.

- Blank Field (150 Characters)



Question 9. *In your opinion, which of the escape rooms puzzles did you find the **hardest** to solve? Please describe the puzzle or list items which were utilised within it.*

- Blank Field (150 Characters)

Question 10. *Did the escape room experience provide you with knowledge that you were previously unaware of, and if so, what new knowledge do you feel you have gained?*

- Blank Field (150 Characters)

Question 11. *Prior to starting the escape room, how good was the information provided to you by the facilitators?*

1. Very Poor
2. Poor
3. Acceptable
4. Good
5. Very Good

Question 12. *Whilst you were playing the escape room, how good were the facilitators at running the game?*

1. Very Poor
2. Poor
3. Acceptable
4. Good
5. Very Good

Question 13. *Once you had finished playing the escape room, how good were the facilitators at explaining the reasoning behind it?*

1. Very Poor
2. Poor
3. Acceptable
4. Good
5. Very Good

Question 14. *Would you recommend the escape room to your friends?*

1. Definitely Not
2. Maybe
3. Definitely

Question 15. *Would you play other Escape Racism escape rooms if you were offered the chance?*

1. Definitely Not
2. Maybe



3. Definitely

Question 16. *If there were an online location which offered free instructions for building and running an escape room like this, would you use it?*

1. Definitely Not
2. Maybe
3. Definitely

Question 17. *Are there any aspects of the escape room which you think could be improved, and if so, how?*

- Blank Field (300 Characters)

Additional Comments. *Please leave any additional relevant comments below.*

- Blank Field (300 Characters)



Checklist

While observing a group playing, it's easy to get distracted by some dynamics. A good solution not to miss anything important is to follow a checklist previously prepared, where to take notes of the main aspects of the game. It is a great method to improve the interaction, the design and the mechanics of the proposed experience.

Below you can find a table of the checklist we used during the testing phase.



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GROUP	GROUP MANAGEMENT INDICATORS							
	Group cohesion	Leadership	Conflict management	Assertive communication	Group communication	Creativity	Inclusion and respect for the diversity of the group	Time management
<p>How would you evaluate the facilitator's relationship with the group? How was the relationship between the participants? How have the group's conflicts been resolved? What are the roles that have appeared in the group? What is the most positive aspect of the escape room? What is the most negative aspect?</p>								

Instructions

Please, evaluate the aspects of each workshop from 1 to 6 and answer the questions.

1. This aspect is not observed at all
2. This aspect is almost not observed
3. This aspect is not observed
4. This aspect has been observed to some extent
5. This aspect is quite observed
6. This aspect is fully observed

Then, answer the questions based on the observation of the escape room



GROUP	GAMEPLAY INDICATORS								
	Logic and purpose of the game	Connection between puzzles	Difficulty of the puzzles	Duration adequacy	Awareness on the subject	Suitability for the target group	Dynamism and fun	Adequacy of materials	Setting
<p>How has the narrative of the escape room theme turned out?</p> <p>Have there been complications in any of the tests?</p> <p>Has significant learning been observed with the escape? Which?</p> <p>Have the materials been appropriate to the theme and development of the game?</p> <p>Did the group complete the tasks, or are they still trapped in the room?</p> <p>How many clues did the facilitator give during the game? When?</p>									