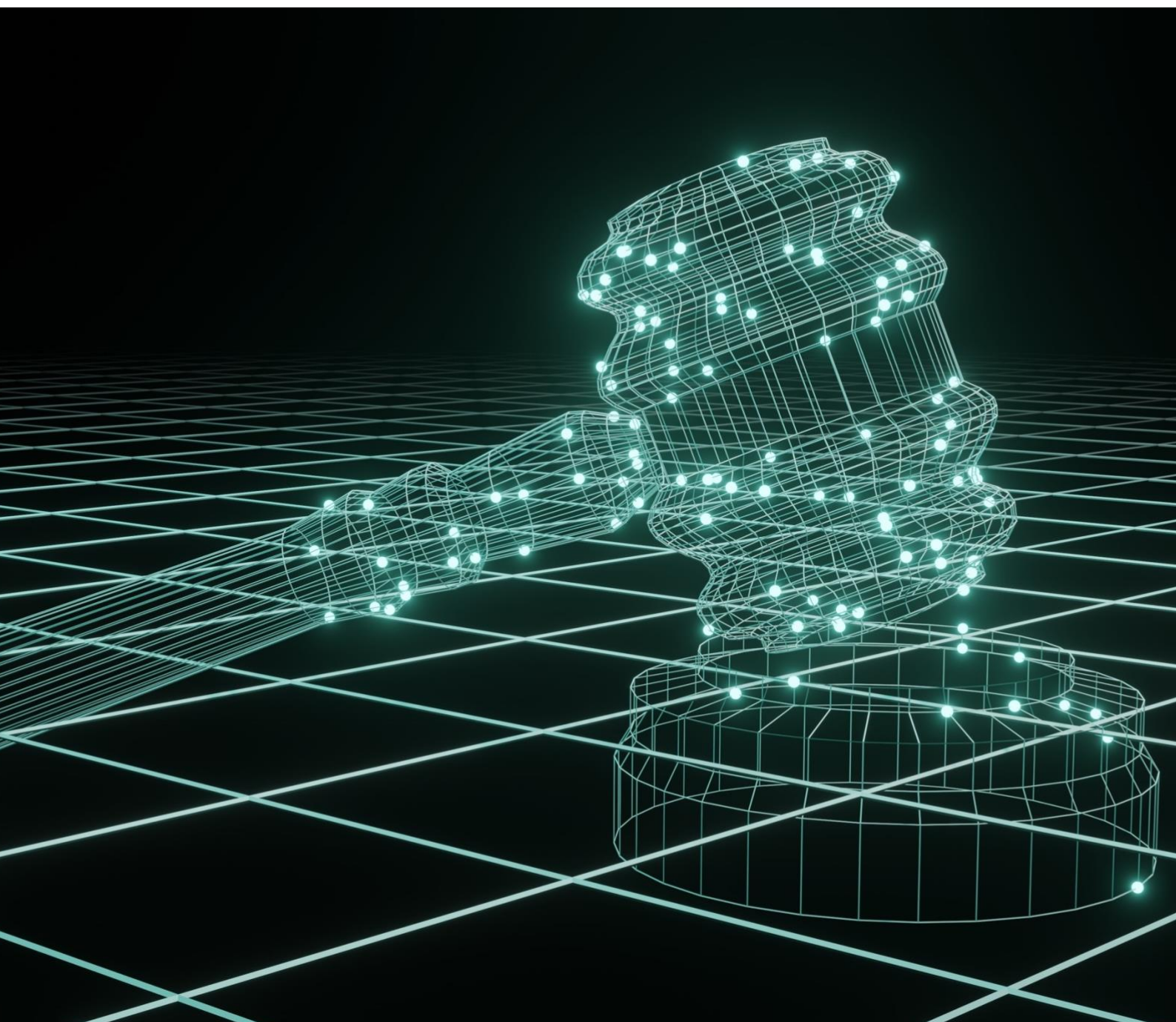


Guilty? The last word to you!

ESCAPE ROOM GUIDE

Escape Racism: Toolbox to Promote Inclusive Communities



Introduction

This escape room is intended to create a scenario in which players have to take a decision on a case of racism and discrimination as judges. During the game, players will receive information on the context where they are playing, which is futuristic and dystopian. They will also find in the room information about the fact for which they are called to take a sentence. The game develops on two levels, the game itself, through the resolution of clues, and the path that leads to the final decision to be made, which is unrelated to the resolution of the games but closely connected in its meaning.

The scenario is structured so that the participants are in a path of identification in which they have to make a decision on an event that happened following racial laws in a dystopian future. The purpose of the escape room is to create a path of raising awareness on how a person may feel being victim of discriminatory laws, putting them in a position of judgment.

Narrative

The context

It's the year 2059 in Sicily. A very strange trend is spreading in the Italian region: blond people are less and less frowned upon by the rest of the population and are increasingly excluded from society. Media and influencers started to make fun of people with blonde hair. Brown hair colour is seen as the Sicilian hair colour, a symbol of identity that must not be put in discussion, so that all other colours have less value. The trend became a major problem, because more and more people adapted the behaviour of the so considered "fun" videos in their everyday lives. Over time, a huge exclusion of people not having brown hair started in Sicily and a clear separation by hair colour started in the society.

It is December 3, 2059 and the sicilian government needs to get more votes. For this reason the president decides to follow the major trend that is spreading very fast in the island, issuing a special decree for the protection of brown people. It is decided to separate blonde hair persons from people with other hair colour in public life as the first government in Italy. An official register with all the blond people is built so that there are special quarters where blond people live, special schools for blond children, places to play, supermarkets, they can only stand in the back of the bus and not sit in the air-conditioned front with comfortable seats, and marriage between people with brown and blond hair is forbidden. The general situation is that people with blond hair have less rights.

The fact

Luca is a 28 years old guy. He has brown hair with a natural blond streak on the back of his head. One day, he is going by bus to the office. Because he always starts working very early in the mornings, he was falling asleep in the bus and didn't hear people talking about him. Someone discovered the blond streak. According to the new decree, it's possible this guy sleeping in the bus coloured his hair to use the comfortable air-conditioned part of the bus, while other people with brown hair don't have the chance to take a seat in the crowded bus! Luca's neighbour is on the same bus and once she noticed the streak in his back, she called the police. Luca goes to a precautionary arrest and a group of judges, according to the special decree, is called to take a decision on his case, in a very secret room. The judges will not leave the room until they won't take the final judgement on Luca's case.

Required materials

To create the setting and puzzles for the “Room of judgement”, you will need a room, where it is possible to positionate the materials and furniture listed below. It is not difficult to create this scenario since it is a kind of office with some materials useful for the games: a wardrobe, a table, chairs, a library with books. The latter of these can also act as a red herring for players and help to hide game items.

Elements for the room:

- 1x wardrobe
- 1x table with drawer
- 1x chest
- 1x library
- 10 or more x general books
- 1x magnetic board
- 1x square puzzle rubber mat as carpet
- 1 x photo frame in the shape of a wooden tree to hang on the wall (or just a draw)
- 2 (or more) x chairs (optional)

Game items

- 1 x secret diary with lock
- 1 x key of the secret diary
- 1 x magic wooden box
- 1 x glass vase
- 1 x plant (fake)
- 15/20 x corks
- 1 x clock with a hidden box
- 1 x phone
- 1 x watering can (or pitcher)
- 1 x wooden
- 1 x chain
- 2 x lock with 4 numbers combination
- 1 x lock with 5 letters
- 1 x wooden box
- 1 x lockbox with 3 numbers combination
- 1 x compass
- 1 x wooden hammer
- 1 x buzzer

Items to be prepared or printed:

- 5 x pictures for the genealogical tree
- 5 x instagram screenshots of Luca’s profile
- 1 x printed morse code

- 1 x printed decree
- 1 x answering machine creation with riddle
- 1 x map with symbols standing for (north, south, east, west)

Combination and Puzzle Boxes may be substituted for standard wooden or cardboard boxes with holes cut into them through which a combination lock can be inserted in order to lock the box shut. The following materials may also be included to act as red herrings, although other objects may be substituted should you desire:

- 1 x police report
- 1 x ICD - 10 book copy (pages on skin diseases)
- Assorted Old Newspapers or Magazines

Preparation

Some of the materials used within the escape room will need to be prepared. In some cases, preparation of materials may require 'do-it-yourself' (DIY) skills. Please seek assistance if you feel uncomfortable doing this yourself.

1. Prepare a laptop or a tablet placed inside the room with the two opening videos, as the first thing players will see, in order to be immersed in the story of the game. The first video is a newscast in which the scenario of history is given (the new racist laws in the Sicily of the future) and the second is the testimony of the person who witnessed Luca's arrest on the bus.
2. Create the genealogical tree of Luke's family. You can use characters like the ones from the game "Guess Who?" or choose random photos, with blond-haired people and brown-haired people. The tree must contain all characters except 5 photos. For each character make sure that there is the photo and the numerical date of birth in the form of 08/10/1990 under the photo. Print the family tree sheet with the 5 missing photos (with blank spaces) and the 5 photos on another sheet. Under the photos of the missing characters there must be the date of birth and the days of the months must be of 5 different colors: blue, red, yellow, green, purple (choose the colors based on the colored numeric lock you can find on the market). These 5 single photos will be hidden inside the room in different places.
3. Procure a wooden magic box: a small box that is not easy to open, you can easily find one on the internet. Be sure it won't be too difficult to be opened: this will be the first short game to solve. Put inside the box a post-it with this sentence: "Time is...too short when you have fun, too long when you get bored...a hint when you play!"
4. Prepare the police report, that is a red herring, which serves to provide elements of Luca's story. Make sure there aren't too many numbers in the report, which can be too misleading.
5. Procure a clock with a hidden box behind. Hide inside the hidden space behind the clock the photo number 1 and a sheet with a printed Morse code. If you don't have a clock with a hidden box available, you can alternatively attach the photo and morse code to the back of the wall clock so it won't show when the clock is hanging.
6. Prepare sheets with Instagram screenshots of Luca's profile (a fake profile, you can create images with photoshop). The aim is to hide a phone number in the sequence of sheets arranged in order on the whiteboard, next to each other. In each sheet insert a photo and a descriptive caption. There must be one or two hidden numbers in the photo. For example, a photo with the birthday cake, with the number on the cake, a descriptive caption about Luca's life.
7. The telephone number must be of one of the facilitators or a registered answering machine. Prepare a riddle of medium difficulty to enter on the answering machine or to say over the phone when players call during the game. Example of a riddle: "If you stand on top of me, I'm still ... if you move away, I spin like a top. Give the definition using an intermittent code".

8. Print a sheet with the morse code and put it in the back of the clock. Procure a button that allows a short and a long beep; if you don't find it, use a free phone app called a "buzzer". This game allows the participants to have photo number 2 from the facilitator who can manually pass it.
9. Print a sheet with a compass and geographic coordinates drawn. Next to each coordinate (north, south, west, east) draw a different symbol, which could be a setting sun, a sun with clouds, a moon, a star.
10. Print a sheet in which you have drawn a path and in sequence the symbols corresponding to the coordinates (therefore a sun, a moon, etc.).
11. The path must be created based on the space available in the room.
12. On the floor, place the coordinates on which the participants will move following the path created. The ideal would be to have a rubber mat formed with squares set like a puzzle, of two different colors, so that visually you have a chessboard.
13. Get a secret diary that closes with a small padlock. Inside the diary, hide photo number 3. Also, on the pages write Luca's reflections, this tool is also very useful to provide the player with further information on the character's history.
14. In the last reflection of the diary, write a note about a friend of Luca who was arrested for being blond. Give a physical description of the boy. On the next page insert photos of Luca's friends scattered with a 4-digit code next to them. The one next to the photo corresponding to the description of Luca's friend is the code that will be used to open the chest.
15. Prepare and print some pages of the ICD-10 book concerning the skin diseases. You can find it easily on the internet. This will be a red herring.
16. Prepare the racist decree and print it. The racist decree is a useful element to provide further details of the dystopian scenario of a future Sicily based on racial laws. The decree contains a game: in the articles of the decree, add extra letters that make the word misspelled (for example in the word "must" add an "r" → "Mustr). The extra letters are used to form the word that unlocks a padlock with letters (suggested word: race).
17. Set up the fake plant: create a mechanism that allows you to hide a code at the base of a plant pot. Get a transparent jar and put inside a laminated leaflet with a code visible and legible from the outside. Cover the base and the code with corks. Place a plant with holes in the base of its pot at the top of the big pot so that there is space (about 20 cm) between the base of the pot and the base of the plant. The plant is better if it is fake, so as not to ruin it. Once the plant is composed, try to pour the water on the plant and see that once the caps are raised, it is possible to read the code.
18. Prepare the final lockbox with the colored numeric lock and set it with the month numbers of the 5 missing photos. Alternatively, you can use a simple 3-digit padlock and insert inside the previous lockbox a sheet with the 5 colors drawn and the phrase "if it is divisible by 2, it is not to be considered". Which means that players must use the 3 odd digits of the months of the missing photos.
19. Put a wooden judge's hammer inside the final lockbox with a sheet that says "The time has come to deliver the sentence. Before leaving the room, the committee decides on Luca's innocence or guilt by carrying out a symbolic action from the decree ". In the

decree it is necessary to insert an article concerning the decision of the judges on the case of Luca.

Creating the room

The location that you use for this escape room must be large enough to contain all of the materials required to play the game plus approximately 4-5 players. It should not, however, be so large that objects and materials are spread over a wide area. If you have access to a larger space such as a classroom, assembly hall, or gymnasium, you could mark out the boundaries of the escape room using hazard tape. If you do create a room in this manner, make sure that your players are aware that they should not step outside the boundaries whilst playing and, if you want to be especially harsh, impose a time penalty on them for doing so. To create the room, use the following steps:

1. In the room there should be a cupboard or cabinet with doors to put inside: the wooden magic box and the police report.
2. Place the family tree sheet on one wall in the room and hide the 5 missing pictures in the right places.
3. Hang the clock on a wall of the room after placing photo number 1 inside the hidden box (or behind the clock).
4. Create a space in a nook with a small table or a stool to place the buzz in.
5. Create a "board of clues" and place it on one of the walls of the room.
6. Place the sheets with the images of the instagram screenshots on the whiteboard with magnets or thumbtacks, in order so that the sequence brings up the phone number.
7. Place a table in the center of the room and place a compass and the computer or tablet on top for the initial videos.
8. Attach the path map sheet to the sides of the closet (or to another piece of furniture in the room) so that it is slightly away from the checkerboard rubber mat. Put a post-it note on the paper that says "do not touch".
9. Place the foam squared carpet under the table
10. Place the key under the final square of the path to open a secret diary.
11. Place the picture number 3 inside the diary
12. Place a bookcase in the room, where you put the secret diary, the ICD-10 Book and a few other books (not too many, and not even misleading)
13. Prepare the chest: put inside a watering can full of water (place it so that the water does not spill), and a box closed with a lock.
14. The letter combination padlock that opens with the word "race", should be positioned for closing the desk drawer (or another closed box).
15. Place photo number 5 inside the drawer closed by the letter combination lock.
16. Fix the vase with the plant on the furniture by attaching it to a sheet of paper attached to the furniture. It is important that the vase is smooth and totally transparent.

17. Put photo number 4 in the lockbox inside the chest and close it with the padlock set with the code at the base of the plant.
18. Place a whiteboard or flipchart with a marker near the exit door in which the players will write the final sentence "guilty" or "innocent". After this last action the escape room will be over and the de-briefing will begin.
19. Place the final lockbox under the judgment board.

Example set-up image

The following image shows an example of how-to set-up the escape room taken prior to initial play.



Game goals and puzzle connections

The game was built along parallel lines, which all lead to the 5 photos that will complete the family tree. Photos 1, 2 and 3 can be found independently in the first phase of the game, as the elements are present in the room from the very beginning. Photos 4 and 5 constitute a second level of the game, which begins with the opening of the chest.

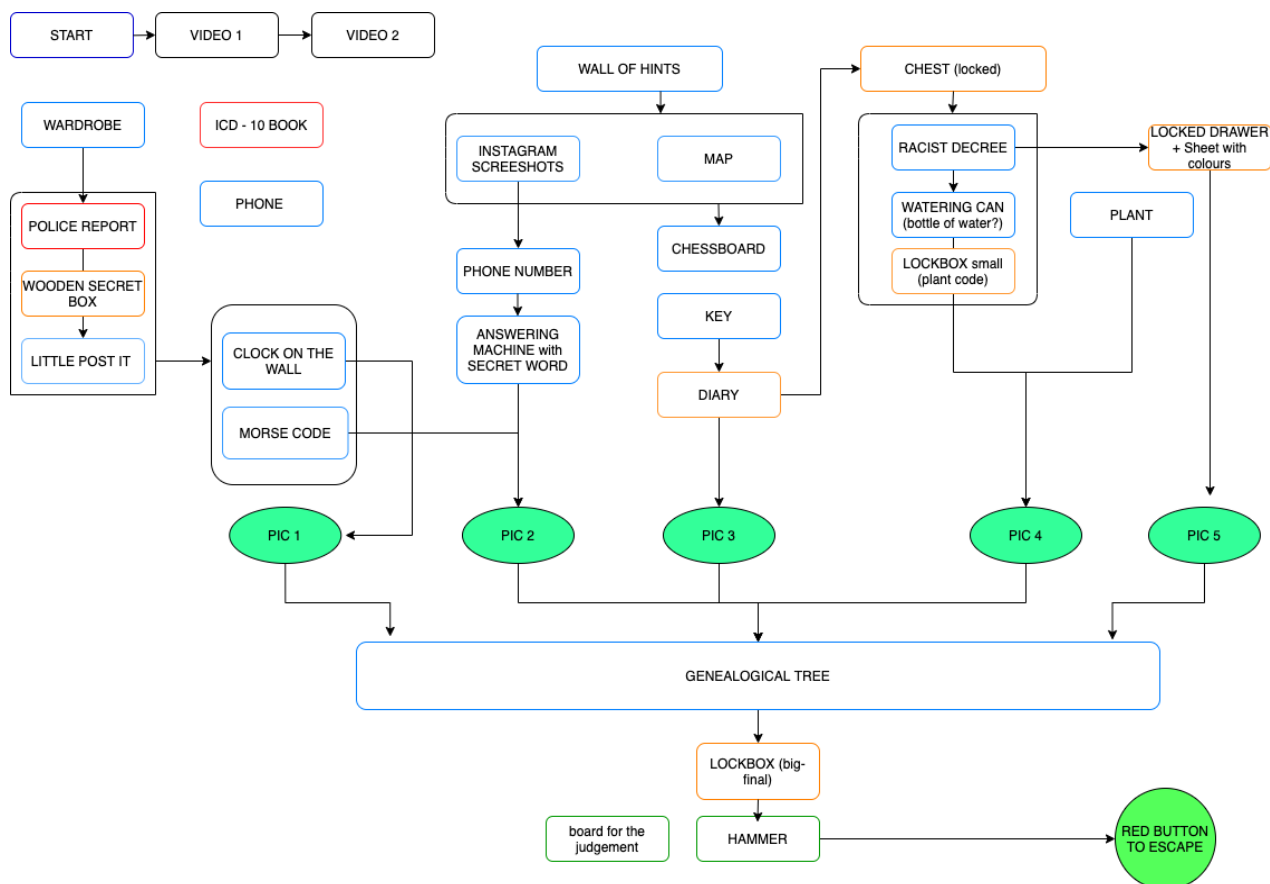
Once the photos have been found, the final stage of the game begins, leading to the players' final decision as to the facts of the story.

The following structure is built into the game.

1. Inside the wardrobe (which is open) they will find the wooden magic box, which will lead to the clock, where they will find photo number 1.
2. Looking at the Instagram screenshots, they will get a phone number.
3. Using the telephone at their disposal, players will call the number found in the screenshots, and listen to an automatic message on the answering machine with a riddle. They will transmit the answer via Morse code by looking at the alphabet provided. They will get picture number 2.
4. Looking around the room, they will notice a compass on the table, a map with a path posted on the closet, and a sheet of coordinates on the whiteboard. By following the directions given by the map and using the compass to determine which is north, you will be able to find the square of the board where the key to the secret diary is.
5. Once they open the secret diary, they will find photo number 3.
6. Reading Luca's testimonies in the diary, they will find the game that will lead them to recognize Luca's friend who has been arrested and the combination to open the chest. The second level of the game begins.
7. Inside the chest they will find the decree with the racial laws, the watering can with water, and a combination lockbox.
8. By putting water into the fake plant, they will find the code that allows them to open the lockbox. Inside they will find photo number 4.
9. Analyzing the racist decree, they will find a word that will allow them to open the drawer in which photo number 5 is located.
10. By analyzing the complete family tree, it is possible to have all the dates and numbers colored. By interpreting the sheet with the colors that was in the drawer, it will be possible to find the code to open the final lockbox.

Game flow chart

The following chart serves to represent how the games connect with each other and how the game flow unfolds.



Legend:

Blue: element for the puzzles

Red: red herring

Orange: box to unlock

Green: Important element to find to escape

How to Win

To complete the game, players must have put together all the photos, and open the final lockbox. Inside the last box they will find the hammer and a sentence that will lead them to make a decision on Luca's case.

The end of the game has a double meaning: the end of the path of games and the symbolic end of the time available to decide on the case. The players have to write on the board if Luca is guilty or innocent and this will officially end the game.

Facilitation

For the introduction use the two videos created to let the participants understand in which context they are playing. The first one will give the context that is the background in which the fact is developed. The second video will give the players the references of the fact on which the scenario is built on. Be sure that the players understand what their goal is and start with excitement and curiosity.

During the game it is important that the group is in a good mood. It does not matter if they are stuck with a puzzle, as long as they have fun with that, but if they are getting bored, the facilitator should intervene to help them.

According to the group age and skills, hints can be provided either verbally by asking questions in the style of a player, 'what' that in the bottle' or written down in a note and thrown into the room. When providing hints try not to make them obvious and most importantly of all, do not solve any part of the puzzle for the players yourself.

Important note: The final action is the basis to start the debriefing phase, so be sure that the group won't run out of time.

Debriefing the Players

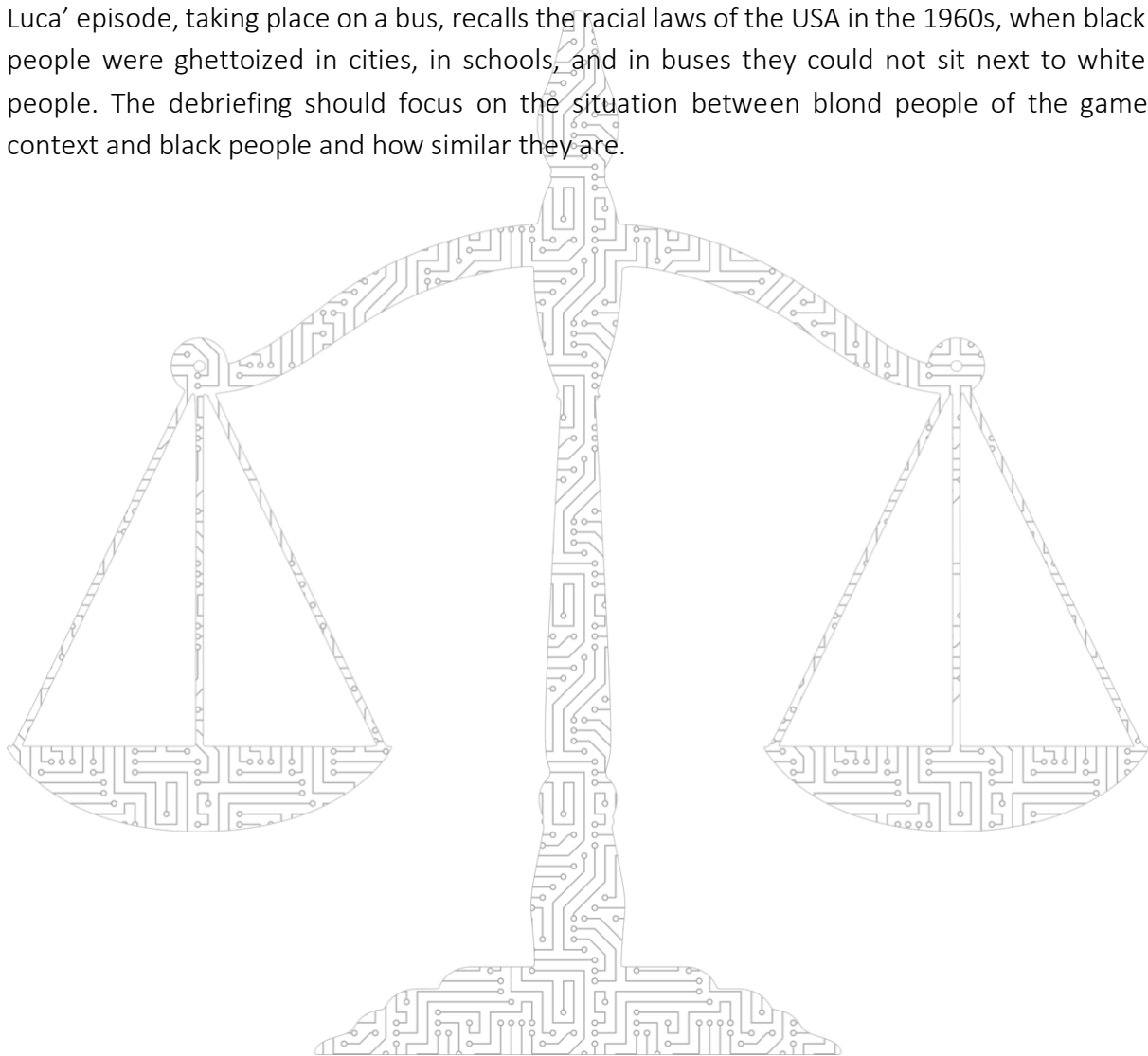
Once the game has concluded, start the debriefing with the players. The debriefing should begin by asking the players how they feel and what they think they have discovered.

The fact that the whole game has been developed on two parallel lines, that of the game and that of the decision on Luca's case, gives the trainer the possibility to reflect on what this process meant for the players, having to decide on the case. In the final moment, in which they have to make the decision, the players have a few seconds to decide together what the verdict should be. The debriefing begins with the very last step of the room.

The facilitator can take a cue from what the players said at that time to start the debriefing. During the game process, if players make any comments related to the story or as a comment

on the room topic, the trainer can make some notes for use in the debriefing. The objective of this phase is to collect the feelings of the players in a role where they have to decide on a case in which racist laws are applied.

Luca' episode, taking place on a bus, recalls the racial laws of the USA in the 1960s, when black people were ghettoized in cities, in schools, and in buses they could not sit next to white people. The debriefing should focus on the situation between blond people of the game context and black people and how similar they are.



Images

Cover Text: conny-schneider-3hkKv6WzjcE-unsplash

Page 13: justice-g2b887ffb1_1280.png

Escape Racism: Toolbox to Promote Inclusive Communities.

Project Number: 2019-2-IT03-KA205-016906