Gamification 4 Inclusion

Methodology of Detective Games
focusing on awareness raising and
making active of young people related
to social issues and vulnerable groups

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VIII. Game Description – Hungary

Title of the game	Bars
Pedagogical aspects	Raising awareness about social issues and Roma communities in an indirect, playful way, in interaction with characters belonging to vulnerable groups and other cooperative activities focusing on developing various skills.
Short storyline	The participants arrive at a police station, where they investigate an on-going case. They discover new clues, meet the suspect – a young Roma man from a village, – and figure out what really happened together.
Target group	14 students / young adults
Timeframe	1,5 hour game plus closing discussion
Venue	Detectivity game venue in a Budapest apartment building space – set up as a police station for the game
Actors	Young Roma and non-Roma educators and artists
Focus question	What are some challenges Roma people face in small villages? (more details below)
Type of game: sensitizing/ educational/historical etc.	Socially oriented sensitizing detective game

Tools, Props

	Basic tools/ scenery	Type and number of gadgets	online tools/ and codes
Game masters' office (outside game narrative)	laptop		2 X laptop connected to TeamViewer, A-chat, VNC
Police station office:	game description, furniture, fictitious case documents 1 on the wall with the basic measurements of the prisoners, police equipment, detectives' equipment	locks, trick box, magnet, text describing Tamás, acting detective's notes on wall, case notes inside closed cupboard, prison visitors' register	witnesses video testimony
Prison	table, mattress	bars, lock, key	attachable description of one character
Archives office	furniture, laptop	magnet, magnet box, case descriptions 2	
Storage room	furniture, costumes, props, etc.	case description 3, online system's user manual, trick box with letters, vault	
Communal space	comfort-oriented (for reception and closing discussion)		

Game Structure

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Game Phase	Arrival, reviewing the rules	Fundamentals	Story formation	The twist	Solution	Conclusion and evaluation
Knowledge gained	Location is a police station: basic rules of the investigation	General background of the case, and main course to take	Basics of the case: who committed what, where, how	Figuring out that someone else committed the crime; new info about the main character, new info about the village	Identity of the real culprit; significance of all clues	Understanding the entirety of the case and its social implications
Venue	Communal space	Police detective's office	Archives office	Archives office, Prison, Storage space	Archives office, Storage space	Communal space
Scenery / Props	Basic	Police detective's office scenery and relevant props	Video interviews trick boxes, magnets, case files	Trick box, vault, items of material evidence	Letters, vault code vault, crime scene photos	
Game type / activity	frontal, oral description	frontal, preliminary analysis	Problem solving, clue to clue, analysis	Conversation with the main character, analysis	Analysis, problem solving, brainstorming, discussion, clue to clue, interactive theatre	Discussion with the main character
Goals	Motivation to take part in the investigation	Division into two groups; understanding the main tasks of the investigation	Finding character documents; learning about characters + the prison.	Reaching the new spaces	Solving the case	Empathising with the character and relevant group

Pedagogical Aspects

The detective game entitled Bars is set in fictional a community visit to a police station where the participants become involved in an ongoing investigation that introduces students in an engaging way to the following social phenomena:

the general outlook and circumstances of vulnerable townships in rural Hungary, and in particular, the changes facing Roma communities, the relationship between majority and minorities, the ruling and the lower class;

crimes rooted in social-financial factors (e.g. stealing wood) in contrast to white-collar crime;

the practice and ramifications of segregation in education and the labour market (e.g. students from segregated secondary schools or classes are barely able to obtain their secondary level skilled labourer's school leaving certificate);

the social and economic function of coops serving small rural townships (often in a monopoly position) and the illegal but indispensable institution of coop loans;

the spectrum of potential relationship types between Roma and non-Roma range from antagonistic to friendly, or even romantic (which expresses the greatest degree of mutual acceptance between two groups according to the Bogardus social distance scale);

the diversity of vulnerable groups, with particular focus on unemployed, non-Roma groups living in vulnerable areas in severe poverty;

the common practice of small rural township municipalities to appropriate EU funds through malfeasance and lack of transparency;

the systematic discriminatory practices of the police and judicial system aimed at citizens of Roma ethnicity or those belonging

to vulnerable groups. (These often result in more severe fines or other forms of punishment for felonies and crimes, as well as in often-superficial investigations of cases involving suspects who are of Roma ethnicity or belong to vulnerable groups, especially when having prior records.)

The elements of the above-mentioned social phenomena appear indirectly within the game, inherent in the story's narrative, its characters, and their background, and discussed after the completion of the game directly, elaborated to the degree the participants' interest allows.

From an educational standpoint, it is important to note that thematic content encountered indirectly in connection to a game's story and characters produce a significantly deeper impression than knowledge acquired from objective, detached sources like textbooks or a classroom setting. This kind of experience based and specifically game-oriented, indirect method of learning is called gamification, and it serves as the fundamental pedagogical approach and method of all instructional detective games.

The elemental effect of the story and characters – most of whom the players encounter only through video footage and chat messages – is intensified by the live action format of the game. One of the most important aspects of sensitizing detective games is that participant get to interact with a member of vulnerable social groups who in fact plays a character belonging to that very group. Discounting the game master playing the role of an assistant police officer, the only lice action character is the suspect of the crime, Tamás Balogh, a Roma young man (played in rotation by two Roma colleagues). The effect of the experience is further intensified by the fact that the first time the participants interact with him, he is behind bars in a cell.

The players meet this representative of a vulnerable group in order to achieve a given goal – to gather information about the case, – which demands impartial observation and communication, what is more, the gaining of the other party's trust. In order to achieve the accepted goal of the game, even those prejudiced against Roma, suspected criminals, and prisoners are prompted

to set aside their preconceptions and investigate with true curiosity and polite communication methods. Therefore, the participants' behaviour is not motivated by a feeling of obligation (ethical, human rights related considerations), but the desire to complete the task, reach a goal, to become a professional detective (utilitarian, professional considerations). In other words, although the participants' primary aim is not to get to know the character or to learn about his circumstances, but to gather relevant information, as any information may turn out to be relevant (e.g. other events, relationships, stories), they are more attentive and open when listening to his answers, the stories he recounts.

The "professional investigators'" strategy described above (open, impartial approach, gaining the interrogated person's trust, paying attention to every detail, even to seemingly irrelevant information) is outlined by the game master before the participants meet the suspect. Consequently, the quest to gain information is accompanied by an indirect side effect: the players interact with the suspect, who shares emotionally charged accounts of himself and other similar individuals belonging to vulnerable groups. One important aspect of this character's design is that he is neither a glorified hero, nor a dishonourable or fearsome villain, but a fundamentally human figure, which ensures the players' empathy and their openness to accept his accounts and the problematic issues these raise.

Besides its focus on raising awareness and suggesting alternative approaches, the game also has a team building function, as well. As the participants are only able to achieve their goal in cooperation, they have the opportunity to experience that every member of the group is valuable. Another way in which the game communicates this message is by exposing the players to a series of challenges, which all demand different skill sets. While certain tasks call for logic, others require manual dexterity, communication and interpersonal skills, visual intelligence, memory, and other competences, thereby allowing participants with different talents to contribute to the success of the group.

Besides the above-mentioned skill sets and competences, the tasks also develop group cooperation, time management, and

conflict resolution skills. The success of solving the case and completing the game guarantees that the encounter with the social issues in question and with the individual belonging to the given vulnerable group, as well as the experiences of cooperative and talent-oriented task solving will be associated with positive feelings.

From a pedagogic standpoint, a crucial requirement for the effectiveness of the game is not to allow participants to feel like they are being influenced, but instead to allow them to express their own opinions, to make their own choices, to solve mysteries by themselves. For this reason, the game master, who plays an assistant police officer, assumes an impartial attitude when describing or confronting the details of the case or stories related to it. His function is to impart the rules of the investigation and to advise the application of the "professional investigators'" strategy, and must not express personal opinions or judgements neither in connection with the participants' remarks, nor about the suspect's person, or the progress of the case and the investigation. This ensures that the participants are not influenced by a predefined narrative to be either accepted or rejected, but are able to conduct their investigation truly according to their own opinions, point of view, and by formulating their own ideas.

Nevertheless, the game master, upon feeling that the participants are not advancing toward the solution, alternatively, that a given operation (e.g. deciphering a code, understanding connections between facts) would require more time than is available or would be needed to ensure that they do not lose interest, may assist the participants with guiding questions. However, the game master's must take care not to give too much assistance, not to hand over the solution, as this would hinder the educational process and preclude the final feeling of success.

The game ends when the true identity of the culprit is revealed. This is a cathartic moment: the innocently accused young man is released from his bonds, and the group gets to applaud their own achievement. Consequently, the assistant police officer and the suspect both abandon their respective characters and invite the participants to take part in a summarizing discussion. During this

discussion, they help clarify any questions potentially remaining regarding the details of the case, and then enquire about the participants' experiences, their feelings and thoughts concerning the game. The game master and the actor steers the discussion towards and elaborate upon the central themes the participants mention. If they do not bring up any of these themes, the two colleagues enquire about their opinion regarding key questions (e.g. stealing wood because of poverty), their own past experiences, and views (e.g. "Would you steal would, if your family was suffering from the cold?"). As far as the colleagues are concerned, this controlled discussion must rely primarily on posing questions and stating facts. Both must refrain from expressing any form of judgement to allow the participants to formulate their own opinion based on their own, as well as their peers' personal experiences, ideas, and points of view.

Short storyline

The group of up to 16 persons arrives at a police station holding an open house in the case of student participants, and as part of a volunteer community service initiative in the case of adults. After welcoming the guests, the assistant police officer shows them some equipment that police investigators use during their work, which the guests can then try out themselves. The assistant officer tells them that the senior police detective is not present but has allowed them to examine an ongoing case in his absence, and consequently, informs them of the rules of investigating. Based on the notes on the wall of the detective's office, the group learns that there was an arson case in a township called Sötétlyuk ("Darkpit") with one person injured, who is now hospitalized. They also learn that the suspect is one Tamás Balogh, with numerous pieces of material evidence (a can of gasoline and a shirt for a fuse), as well as detailed written testimonies (the coop owner, a neighbour, a co-worker, the mayor, his mother) pointing to his guilt.

As the material evidence and the testimonies are kept separate locations, the group divides into two smaller squads in order to investigate more efficiently. One squad proceeds to another room, where they must find and examine the testimonies, which

are both in written form and in video format. Meanwhile, the others remain in the detective's office and after further examination of the notes on the wall, deduce how to open a closet, which contains better quality photographs of the mentioned material evidence, as well as a copy of the rules of conduct for the penitentiary. This leads to the realisation that the suspect is on-site and can therefore be interrogated. After being informed and accepting the rules of interrogation, this group enters the penitentiary, where they converse with the suspect. Both squads gain information, which forces them to re-evaluate the suspect's role in the case, and which suggests the involvement of other suspicious characters.

The squad that had left to attain further testimonies now have an understanding of the statements of other persons from the township (the coop owner, a neighbour, a co-worker, the mayor, his mother), and therefore arrive at the suspect's cell with a more compassionate and helpful attitude than the previous squad had. Meanwhile, Tamás has not only provided the first squad with information directly connected to the case, but has also shared personal accounts. Some of these concern prejudice and discrimination against the Roma (in school, from the police and the justice system). Others call attention to the challenges vulnerable groups face (e.g. after the death of a single parent, he became the sole breadwinner at 16, had to break off his studies, was forced to steal wood because of severe poverty, and obtained a criminal record). In contrast, the second group, which has already learned of the suspect's affair with the non-Roma injured victim of the arson, is informed by Tamás about the diverse types of relationships between Roman and non-Roma townsfolk. In so doing, he demonstrates that the relationship between different groups does not necessarily have to be antagonistic.

By the time the second squad reaches Tamás to interrogate him, the first squad manages to reach the storage room containing the material evidence itself based on the information the young man provided. Once there, they are also able to inspect the documents and videos the other squad has already examined. They discover material evidence corroborating the statements Tamás previously made, as well as other photographs and a safe.

At this point, they are re-joined by the other squad who have finished their interrogation of Tamás, and based on hi instruction find a trick box containing his correspondence with his girl-friend, who was injured in the fire. In order to tackle the three new tasks, the group divides into three squads this time. One reads the letters and sorts the relevant information. Another occupies itself with unlocking of the safe by deciphering certain codes. The third uses the police communications system to interrogate certain characters encountered through the written and video testimonies.

After reaching their objectives respectively and obtaining new information, the three squads collate their findings, discuss possible theories, and try to identify a possible suspect in light of the newly acquired evidence, the newly understood relationships and motives. As one additional piece of information is needed besides the deciphered code to open the safe, which can only be provided by Tamás, the young man is led in wearing handcuffs. After obtaining the necessary information from him, they open the safe in which they find a piece of evidence that proves the guilt of one of the other suspicious characters. In light of this development, the case is considered closed, and Tamás is set free. The game ends with the participants applauding themselves, which is followed by final summarizing discussion.

(The game is not described in more detail in order to ensure some surprises even for those who have read our material.)

Target group

The game was initially designed to target primarily secondary level students. However, we intentionally involved diverse groups in our games organized as dissemination events in order to gauge their reaction.

Based on our experiences, we believe that the game is enjoyable and interesting for adults, as well. Only one adult only group took part in the game, and their feedback indicates they enjoyed the game, although they were slower than all other student groups

were. Accordingly, we believe the game should not have an upper age limit.

As for the student groups, one 10th grade class from an elite secondary school, one 9th grade class from an average secondary school, and a higher grade class from a school teaching students belonging to exceptionally vulnerable groups participated in the game. Based on the feedback, the game was enjoyable and effective for the students of the average secondary school. The students of the elite school found it difficult to loosen up and follow their creativity whims. However, the game was judged favourably among both this class, as well as among the students belonging to exceptionally vulnerable groups, who also may experience their fair share of discrimination and criminality, albeit in an urban setting.

Based on our assessments, we have concluded that the game is appropriate and effective for all ages above 13, and particularly for young people irrespective of ethnicity or social status. While for middle class target groups belonging to majority groups the game primarily serves to raise awareness and suggest alternative approaches, for Roma students belonging to vulnerable groups it serves as a source of empowerment.

Timeframe

The duration of the game is approximately one and a half hours, which – according to our observations – it may exceed by no more than 20 minutes. The summarizing discussion is another thirty minutes. However, if it is possible to include a recess between the completion of the game and the discussion, the latter may take as long as an hour as there is ample amount of themes to cover

Venue

The game was realized within a venue provided by Detectivity, which contained five separate spaces. The first space was used to welcome and accommodate guest, and was the site of the summarizing discussion. A second space served as the absent

senior detective's office, where the first phase of the game took place leading up to the first split into two squads. A third space contained written and video documents, while a fourth space was set up as a police storage room to hold evidence. One additional smaller space was outfitted to resemble a penitentiary, where the participants could interrogate the suspect behind bars.

Thus, the use of multiple spaces had a significant role in determining the dynamic of both the group and the progress of the investigation: the participants only realize the existence of various spaces only at certain stages of the game, and may access those spaces only after certain conditions are met (e.g. finding a key). Besides the tools and clues necessary for the continued progress of the game, the spaces were also furnished with props that matched the fictional character or function of the room. In this way, the game space itself provided a diverse landscape for the participants with multiple twists and turns.

Other important requirements of preparing the game space is firstly that the fictional rooms should seem authentic and relevant to the narrative of the game, and secondly the capacity to guarantee that no one besides the participants, the game master, and the actor is present during a game to disturb the game play.

Most spaces were equipped with video surveillance, which allowed the game master to monitor the progress of both squads externally. In this way, the group could work independent, and the game master would only intervene in case of significant difficulties to assist with guiding questions.

Actors, colleagues

The character of the assistant police officer, who in this game also functions as the game master, was played by three young colleagues in rotation (Katalin Benya, Ágnes Györe, and Dániel Lakatos). All three had experience as game masters and performers, and with non-formal education, and participated in both domestic and international training courses in relation to the project, as did the two actors (Gyula Antal Horváth and Richárd Kiss)) playing the character of Tamás, the suspect in rotation.

One had considerable experience as a performer, the other received training in the field of non-formal education. Therefore, all characters had sufficient trained and prepared to deal with young people, facilitate games, moderate discussions, play characters, and improvise in critical situations.

It should also be noted that two further social scientists (Andrea Ignácz and Judit Ignácz) took part in the project, and assisted in developing the design of the game's background, main story, and precise details.

The executive management of the game was conducted by Márton Illés (Autonómia Foundation) and Ágnes Simor (Detectivity), while Anna Hanák (Detecivity) also served as professional consultant. The two organizations had previously collaborated in creating other cooperation-based awareness raising detective games. Autonómia Foundation has decades worth of experience with complex social initiatives and training programs focusing on Roma. Detectivity was one of Hungary's pioneers in developing the genre of the detective game, as well as in the development and management of numerous other types of games.

Focus Questions

- How efficiently are we able to judge either a criminal case or an individual belonging to a vulnerable group at first glance?

- What kind of challenges confront young persons of the vulnerable Roma ethnicity living in disadvantaged rural townships?

- What kind of discrimination do the Roma face within the education system, from the part of the police and the justice system, and in other areas of life?

- What are some differences between crimes committed due to social-financial hardships and white-collar crime?

- How can we cooperate efficiently as a team; and what are some personal, social, and practical aspects that merit attention either during the game or in our everyday lives?

Main focus and methods of planning and realization

As we wanted to involve Roma and non-Roma in the planning and realization of the game, we made a call for applications for young people having experience in youth work, non-formal education or acting, and recruited two colleagues. Their job was to play the role of the main Roma character in the game. Three Detectivity colleagues were involved to ensure experienced detective game facilitation. Because of the game's sociological relevance, we also invited two young Roma sociologists to serve as experts in the planning stage.

As our previously engineered socially themed sensitizing detective game involving close to 20 characters/colleagues was financially unsustainable, we decided to devise a game needing only two personnel, one game facilitator and one Roma character. All other relevant characters appeared in videos, letters, or via chat. This allowed for the implementation of a long-term, sustainable feature detective game.

For sustainability reasons and in order to ensure the optimal flexibility of the game to the numerous on-going feature detective games at Detectivity, only the main focus on Roma issues was fixed, but not the exact details of the game.

After a series of brainstorming sessions with our team members about what kind of characters, social context, and crime story we should devise, we decided to focus on a fictional, but characteristic disadvantaged Hungarian regional township. The situation of Roma communities within such settlements suffering from social and economic disadvantages is particularly challenging. We thought it important to focus on their circumstances as these are practically unknown among both Roma and non-Roma urban young people. Wishing to avoid potentially negative publicity to one specific village by representing one specific issue, we decided to mix numerous stories into one fictional one.

We also wished to avoid presenting a stereotypical main character, and so made our hero the breadwinner of the family (supporting his sister and mother), who has a non-Roma girlfriend,

and who is close in terms of age to the members of the targeted young people to ensure their empathy. Although we intended to show the challenges these community faces though his story, we did not want to paint an idealized picture about him. For this reason, his character and backstory was shown to be tainted somewhat, for example, he stole wood from the forest in order for his family to survive the winter; sometimes he gets angry and says things he does not really mean.

Regarding the actual crime within our story, we intentionally avoided keeping it simple and describing, for example, a theft as that perhaps not be intriguing enough for young people,. However, we also want to refrain from discussing violence (e.g. murder, rape), as such cases may have a substantial emotional load on the participants, while also shifting the focus of the narrative and the message of the game. Therefore, we came up with a case of arson, which even had a victim in serious condition currently in a hospital.

The main concept was to present a seemingly obvious case in which, at first sight, the main character appears to be guilty. However, after interrogating him, finding clues, examining footage showing the interrogation of other characters, whom they also interrogate themselves (via chat), the participants gradually find out that the main suspect is innocent, and then must uncover the identity of the real culprit.

Roma are regularly portrayed as criminals within Hungarian public discourses, and their biased treatment by the police and the justice system is well documented. Our aim was to confront the participants with such a situation and to have them experience how their own understanding and opinion may change following closer investigation. Beside the main plotline of the crime itself, the narrative of the game also includes numerous subplots without which one cannot understand the circumstances of disadvantaged Roma people living in the remote countryside.

Although objective information and clues serve as the starting point for the investigation, the greatest impact is provided by meeting the suspect while he is sitting there behind bars. The

personal nature of the encounter and the discussion with the detained suspect ensures a strong emotional effect, which may potentially influence their own personal attitudes, as well.

The structure of the game is based on diverse phases and tasks, some of which focus on logic, while others on communication and cooperation skills, and empathy. The game involves various location changes, utilizing different spaces of the venue in order to maintain a continuously engaging game flow and provide an exciting experience for participants of different skills and interests.

Obviously, ideologically biased communication and facilitation often turns out to be counterproductive. Although the game discusses relevant social themes, it is not tainted by an underlying ideological approach. Various points of view are presented, partly by the live characters and by ones who communicate with participants through videos or via chat. Furthermore, the game facilitator playing the character of an assistant police officer does take any position concerning the guilt or innocence of the suspect, and expresses no judgement about Roma, but merely helps the participants carry out their task according to their own approach. The goal of sensitizing games is not to convince the participants of some truth, but rather to help them examine a situation from different points of view and thereby reach their own opinions. By doing so, we may inspire them to be socially responsible, self-reflective and active members of their communities in real life.

Evaluation of the game

During May of 2019, 79 participants took part in the game, most of them from secondary schools, one group from an elementary school, and one group of young adult youth workers. Seventy-seven of them filled out anonymous questionnaires evaluating the game in terms of enjoyment, excitement, innovation, and ability to inspire and to encourage the re-evaluate of social issues and vulnerable groups. Eighty percent of the participants gave a positive overall evaluation. Regarding the qualitative answers, most participants (21) stated that the most enjoyable part of the game was encounter with the live character, quite a few

of them (6) referred also to the interactive online communication with other characters. Therefore, as intended, personal communication with the character belonging to the vulnerable group and the communication with other characters had the greatest impact on participants.

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