



**Methodology for
sensitizing detective game
about sensory impaired
and Muslim people
in Varna**

Methodology for sensitizing detective game about sensory impaired and Muslim people in Varna

Title of the game	Has anyone seen Iskren?
Pedagogical aspects	<p>The game has a strong sensitizing component stemming from the active participation of the blind community sharing personal stories and demonstrating typical life situations. Elements of the game plot are built on the strengths of the blind community as active sports people capable of exercising activities supposedly out of their limited capabilities, e.g. archery and table tennis.</p> <p>In addition from a pedagogical point of view, the game adds an awareness raising element about the rising far right wing across Bulgaria and Europe. Through sharing personal stories and facing classic stereotypes participants meet Muslim young people and learn more about the type of discrimination they face on a daily basis.</p>
Short storyline	<p>The game in Varna is a story about a nice and helpful guy named ISKREN supporting the blind community of the city living in a post-communist territory at the adjacent neighbourhood around non-functioning factory for blind people where a mixture of visually impaired and average people live in. ISKREN is supporting different kind of vulnerable groups – with special needs or specific ethnic status by education through sports activities and he is willing to demonstrate his meaningful work to as many young people as possible in the city. Once the groups of youngsters representing different schools and organisations arrive to meet him, he appears to be missing. They are invited to help the process of looking for ISKREN and suddenly the young people need to dive into the rarely known but complex, interesting and challenging world of the blind community and their community center, overcoming different tasks while being blind folded, such as blindfolded archery, showdown (table tennis for blind people), Brail messages and Turkish notes, decoding secret boxes and messages, QR codes. As the group is separated in two, each team goes through at least three different types of challenges – physical, logical, communicational and mixed, so that the story line together with the variety of tasks could provoke their active participation and involvement while maintaining a high level of interest. The whole process brings them to the moment where they discover that ISKREN is OK and the main aim if the game was to make them experience the life of blind and visually impaired people, as well as ethnic minorities from the perspective of their strengths and social challenges.</p>

Short storyline	<p>The scenario in details: The IOA team welcomes participants to the joint event with the College of Tourism - Varna about the various types of animation techniques to be used to entertain tourists and young people during the summer season. Students from the college come to learn more about gamification and how they can further explore it professionally. The participants are about to meet ISKREN who is a member of the local community (his father is partially blind), works on small projects with the blind people in the neighbourhood and has background in sports and physical activities specially designed to take into account the needs of blind people. As the group moves around the neighbourhood, they come across BONCHO who is Iskren's father (he is blind) and seems to be worried and confused as he has not seen Iskren since yesterday (the group of participants is a side witness to the whole process (they hear a conversation) as Boncho identifies the voice of one of IOA facilitators and approaches her telling her the story of Iskren's disappearance and asks her whether she has seen him and if she can help him find his son. Boncho has been to the police to file an application for a missing person. There he was told that earlier that day a blind person from the local chess team for visually impaired people had reported some suspicious noises and the door of the club being forced. The police who went to check found abandoned male belongings - a hat and sunglasses who seem to be Iskren's. Boncho confirmed his son had similar possessions and gave the police detailed description of his son. After he did the paperwork, he left the police station and decided to do something himself as he knew time was precious in case something had happened to his son. Boncho has come to the Cultural center to ask about Iskren. He does not know what to do, where to start from and who to ask for help... The IOA team offers to help him and asks participants to join the search while visiting the various sports/animation facilities within the Blind community.</p>
Target group and aim	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Young people aged 18+ from the College of Tourism in Varna – to get to know Social Gamification and Sensitizing Games approaches as an alternative to the classical tourism animation activities; 2.Young people from local secondary schools aged 16+ in Varna – to get familiar with the existence of the neglected and forgotten neighbourhood of blind people and the existing community there, as well as to become aware of the life they experience in its fullness with all its pros and cons; 3.Young people volunteering for non-governmental organizations in Varna – to broaden their knowledge on different vulnerable groups in the cities as well as alternative place to volunteer and support. To present them an alternative way to tackle delicate topics through gamification for social inclusion and active citizenship;
Timeframe	<p>The game is planned for 60 minutes active play + 30 minutes follow-up for debriefing and discussion with the participants</p>

Venue, specifics of the venue	The game is played at the premises of the blind community of Varna, namely at the sports facilities, the cultural hall and the cafeteria within the Uspeh building.
Actors	<p>Sensory impaired actors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boncho – the father of the missing main character ISKREN; - Eli and Stoyan – two sportsmen at the showdown (table tennis for blind people) training room; - Neli, Vanyo and Miroslav – two sportsmen and one coach at the archery training facility; - Maya (Desislava) – the girlfriend of ISKREN volunteering in the archery training facility; - Spasena and Stefani – one instructor and one facilitator at the Braille/chess training room; <p>Non-sensory impaired actors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maria and Nora – two facilitators escorting the game participants; - Dido and Iva – two bartenders in the cafeteria; - Musa (Cafer) and Leyla (Adel) – two Muslim characters – male and female; - Plamena (Simona) – one additional far right female character at the cafeteria; - Kaloyan – one person at the cloakroom;
Focus question	<p>Segregated lifestyle within the blind community</p> <p>The game helps participants to get familiar with the non-popular topic of segregated neighbourhood for disabled communities created during socialism era that still exist in big cities in Bulgaria but without the social support and benefits of the state as it was during the socialist state. Specifically in the game in Varna, participants are brought to the USPEH (SUCCESS) neighborhood of blind people where there is a non-functioning factory for blind people, a living complex area and community center facilities. The game represents both the life of visually impaired people with their strengths and challenges in general as well as the specifics of their life in a community created in another area that is not functioning with its full support capacity as before.</p> <p>In addition, the game addresses an important social topic, namely the rising far right nationalistic narrative in Bulgaria. Since 2003 Lukov march is organized - an annual torchlight procession hosted by Bulgarian National Union in memory of general Hristo Lukov – an anti-semitic and ex-minister of war during the WWI and leader of the Union of Bulgarian National Legions. In its early years the march gathered barely 30 people while nowadays thousands of far right supporters gather in Sofia, including Polish, Hungarian, Czech, French and Swedish nationalists united into a special block during the march, led under the banner with the slogan "Defend Europe of the Fatherlands".</p> <p>Questions to be asked to the participants:</p> <p>How do you feel at the end of the game? Why?</p> <p>What did it provoke in terms of thoughts, feelings and reflections?</p> <p>What are you going to take from it?</p> <p>What was the strongest or the AHA moment for you?</p>

<p>Focus question</p>	<p>Would you like to ask the actors and facilitators something in terms of the place, the activities and their role? If you could compare your concerns regarding blind people community and life before and after the game, what have changed? Why? Have you witnessed hate speech and/or discriminatory behavior towards those communities in your daily life? Or on social networks, in electronic or print media?</p>
<p>Type of the game/ sensitizing/ educational/historical. etc.</p>	<p>A mixed story line with a criminal component and a sensitizing element starting with a personal story and following the from clue to clue process. The mixed methods of investigation combines small performances, drama pedagogy, problem solving situations, brainstorming sessions and discussions to lead the participants through the daily life within the blind community. Each group passes through at three different challenges so that they could maintain a high level of involvement, interest and engagement – a communicational, a physical, a logical and mixed challenges.</p>

Tools, gadgets

List of basic tools /Scenery/	List of needed gadgets/number of them/	Online list, with needed codes
Cafeteria fully equipped and functioning, ideally regularly used by the blind community itself	1	
Lost and found box	1	
A handwritten card in Turkish language	1	Nothing is what it seems to be. Life is a constant struggle. Come and compete with me at the showdown room.
Sports equipment for showdown for two players	2 sets of protective eyewear and gloves 2 racquets and a ball	
Blind folds	4 pieces at the showdown room 4 pieces in the chess room	
Protective gloves	1 pair at the showdown room	
A box with a hidden opening	1 in the showdown room 1 in the cafeteria	
QR code in halves	1 piece cut in two halves	The QR code leads to IOA Facebook page where a video message is left revealing the game finale
Jackets	3 pieces at the cloakroom	
Braille coded message	2 lines cut in 10 coded words	When the king is gone, the key is with the queen. Find my queen and get the key!
Chess boards and figures	10 sets specially designed for blind	
Archery equipment	Three sets including bow, arrows, targets, special equipment for blind archers' positioning people	

Structure of the game



Arriving + Rules

Venue 1. Meeting point – College of Tourism Varna or the bus stop close to the Community Center of Blind People

Nora and Maria welcome the participants to the joint event of IOA and the College of Tourism – Varna/Youngster from local NGOs/students from local high schools and talk with them about the various types of animation techniques they know to entertain and get entertained, and different types of social sports. They mention that gamification is what will be discussed today and that it is a tool that they can further explore during the day today. Nora mentions that the participants are about to meet ISKREN who is a member of the local community (his father is partially blind), works on small projects with the blind people in the neighbourhood and has background in sports and physical activities specially designed to take into account the needs of blind people.

Timing: walking distance from the College of Tourism to the Blind community cultural center - 15 minutes, walking distance from the bus stop to the community center – 5 min.

Picture: The route from the College to the Cultural hall. The bus stop is on the way from the College of Tourism to the Community Center with the Cultural Hall



NB! While entering the premises and being shown around the participants are also instructed to respect the rules of order in the neighbourhood of the blind people (not to make noise, not to move objects and put things on the paths used by the local blind people, to act respectfully in the area)



Story coming out + Basic infos

Venue 2. Beginning of the game – Cultural hall of the Blind community - Varna

As the group moves around the neighbourhood, they come across BONCHO who is Iskren's father (he is blind) and seems to be worried and confused as he has not seen Iskren since yesterday [the group of participants is a side witness to the whole process (they hear the conversation) as Boncho identifies Nora's voice and approaches her telling her the story of Iskren's disappearance and asks her whether she has seen him and if she can help him find his son]. Boncho has been to the police to file an application for a missing person. There he was told that earlier that day a blind person from the local chess team for visually impaired people had reported some suspicious noises and the door of the club being forced. The police who went to check found abandoned male belongings - a hat and sunglasses who seem to be Iskren's. Boncho confirmed his son had similar possessions and gave the police detailed description of his son. After he did the paperwork, he left the police station and decided to do something himself as he knew time was precious in case something had happened to his son. Boncho has come to the Cultural center to find Nora and ask her about Iskren. He does not know what to do, where to start from and who to ask for help... Nora is surprised as she has an appointment with Iskren about the College of Tourism/youth group group and takes the request seriously; she apologises to the young people from the group because unforeseen events have happened and asks them if they can help investigate the disappearance of Iskren.

Maria joins the conversation and offers to split the group into small units and they go check the last places and people who have been/seen Iskren...

Maria, Nora and Boncho quickly discuss the places where Iskren usually spends time while in the blind community neighbourhood - the bar and the different leisure facilities. They mention Iskren's friends and their usual meeting places. Boncho also mentions that the abandoned belongings were found at the chess room so they need to go and talk to the chess players, too. Nora suggests the group is split into 2 smaller groups - A and B, and they go to the below listed locations in the company of a local assistant who can help them find the places within the blind community center.

LOCATIONS' ROADMAP:

Group A, Location 1 (A1) The cafe at the blind people cultural center (communication challenge)

Group A, Location 2 (A2) The table tennis room for blind people (physical challenge)

Group A, Location 3 (A3) The Cloakroom (logical challenge)

Group B, Location 1 (B1) The chess club for blind people (logical challenge)

Group B, Location 2 (B2) Meeting Maya - Iskren's girlfriend at the archery training facility (physical challenge)

Group B, Location 3 (B3) Meeting Plamena and Leyla at the café (communication and logical challenge)

Both Groups - AB, Location 4 (AB4) Connecting clues in the lobby - discovering the truth (digital clue challenge)

Available data at the start of the game:

A pair of glasses and a baseball hat have been found at the blind people's chess club. Earlier the previous day a member of the club heard noises and reported to the police that there has been a breakthrough. Iskren's father reported his son missing for 24 hours at the police station. He confirmed the found belongings from the chess club were his son's. There is no information where the young man was, if he had disappeared or something worse had happened to him. The police have been investigating all possible scenarios.

What is known is that Iskren had a meeting with Nora to demonstrate to the guest group from the College of Tourism new ways for animation. His father reported he also went out to meet his girlfriend Maya the day before and then he never came back home.



A1. At the cafeteria:

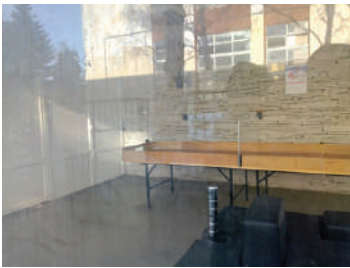
There are average blind people from the community around from the everyday visitors. There are two bartenders. They both know Iskren and confirm he was in the previous day. They provide info about his company and what he drank. They also offer participants to check the lost/found box with items from cafe visitors where one remembers he picked up some stuff from Iskren last night. (Note on actors: one of the bartenders is non-cooperative while the other who suggested the lost/found box is a proud Bulgarian/far right supporter and hates Turkish people, which is visible from his outfit and general behavior – sharp, sarcastic nationalist comments, jokes and gestures).

Within the lost/found box the participants find an envelope with a note in Turkish (with a beautiful postcard inside) addressed to Maya. There are also some symbols on the back of the card which seem like a message. They should translate it with google translator/decode it and see what it says. The bartender who hates Turkish people sees an excellent opportunity to accuse Musa who in his opinion is a potential risk for everybody since Musa is of Turkish origin.

At that moment Musa comes in the cafe. He has signs he has been in a fight - he has a blue eye and he approaches the bartenders asking for the envelope. He sees the envelope in the hands of the participants and starts an argument where they found it and why they opened it. He engages in a conversation with the group and shares a personal story of discrimination and violence based on the rise of far right nationalist groups in the last couple of years locally. He claims he was attacked by neo Nazis/skinheads that night (here he shares his personal story and isolation, hate speech and discrimination). Musa mentions Iskren and Maya being his only friends lately who support him. He knows nothing much about Iskren last night. He says the postcard is his, he wrote it to Maya. Last time he met Iskren he asked him to keep it as he wrote on it a riddle which Musa should use only if he is in danger of something happens to Maya and/or Iskren himself.

The message says: "Nothing is what it seems to be. Life is a constant struggle. Come and compete with me at the showdown room."

Musa helps participants translate the note from Turkish if they have not done the google translate yet or if they have the text starts thinking out loud with them about what it might mean. Eventually they see the key to the symbols message in the note and all solve the clue to lead them to the sports center where another key is hidden.



A2. The table tennis room for blind people:

The A group of participants then heads for the showdown room. Upon entering they find two blind people – a man and a woman, playing showdown. While playing they mention Iskren and what he taught them about the game. They do not notice the group at first. Once the game is over, the referee asks the visitors whether they are the new volunteers who will play in the tournament this weekend at the blind community.

They should explain the reason why they are there - looking for Iskren who seems to be missing.

The referee should tell them that there is no free lunch/the table tennis club has a rule that nothing is shared with outsider but if they are interested in joining/volunteering, he can maybe offer some details about Iskren. The group is invited to play a game – two blindfolded people playing against each other on showdown, two blindfolded against each other – arm wrestling (till everybody from the group tries something), and if they manage it, they get a clue. This part of the game gives the opportunity to participants to “switch” roles with the vulnerable target group – they become weak and the blind become strong as they are the experts. Experiencing being a weak player in a game against blind people where an eyesight is crucial brings provokes strong aha moments, reflections and mind shift in terms of stereotypes about blind and visually impaired people. In addition to the experience explain, the game itself provokes participants to be an active part of the investigation instead of passive observers and followers. Physical activation provokes mental and emotional one.

At the end, the guys share that the last time they saw Iskren he sounded strange. He left a a mystery secret box to be given only to the ones that have deserved it. The box itself as a challenge provokes the intriguing moment and feeling of suspense in participants, maintaining a high level of engagement. After sometime (and support from facilitator if necessary) participants find a number for a cloakroom.

A3. The Cloakroom

All the group moves towards the cloakroom where they are welcome by Kaloyan. They ask whether there is a cloth corresponding to the number from the cloakroom they have. They receive a jacket being recognized as ISKREN's jacket by Kaloyan and they start investigating it till the moment they find a piece of paper that has a partial QR code on it. While wondering, chatting and discussing what is happening the other group should arrive here as well. which Musa should use only if he is in danger of something happens to Maya and/or Iskren himself.

The message says: “Nothing is what it seems to be. Life is a constant struggle. Come and compete with me at the showdown room.”

Musa helps participants translate the note from Turkish if they have not done the google translate yet or if they have the text starts thinking out loud with them about what it might mean. Eventually they see the key to the symbols message in the note and all solve the clue to lead them to the sports center where another key is hidden.

B1. The Chess Club for Blind People

The B group goes to the Chess Club room where Iskren's belongings were found. One of the club's members is there ordering the room being messed up after the events from the previous day. He immediately asks all of the participants to put blindfolds as on some of the chess boards there are very new chess winning positions discovered by the club that cannot be seen by anybody and they must be kept secret until the tournament at the weekend. On one of the chess boards there are left some words in Braille each on separate piece of paper: "When the King is gone, the key is in the Queen! Find my Queen and take the key!". Meanwhile the special chess positions are hidden by the local club member and participants can unfold their eyes and have a look at the message collected, get familiar with the chess and the Braille books. The facilitator supports participants in the process of decoding the message by giving the separated Braille papers to them and asking them to translate them and connect the message in Bulgarian words. After brainstorming and some support from actors and facilitators who is the missing king and who is the queen participants are directed to Maya as potential queen as ISKREN is most probably the missing king. Afterwards, they go to look for Maya.



B2. Meeting with Maya - Iskren's girlfriend

Maya is inside the Cultural hall practicing archery. There are some other blind people also doing archery. There is an instructor who asks the group to wait for the people to finish their turn shooting.

Maya comes and asks who they are. She asks who instructed them to find her there. She did not see Iskren the night before although they had an appointment.

Maya and Iskren have been dating for a while but their relationship is not clear. Maya invites the participants to join the archery training while thinking aloud and giving suggestions where to find more info about ISKREN. After they try out archery blindfolded, the participants get to know that Iskren has a girl that is his acquaintance

since childhood Plamena who used to share a lot in common with Iskren before but they are not so close anymore. They sometimes meet at that time in the cafeteria.

B3. At the cafeteria – Plamena and Leyla

The participants find Plamena at the café (location A1/B3) - a acquaintance of Iskren knowing him and his family from their childhood. She wears a T-shirt which has a “clean Bulgaria” print. They ask her about Iskren. Plamena under the influence of far-right propaganda, angrily responds back about his recent interest in helping “losers” and other people of problem for the community. She put an accent on how this affects the peace in the family and the community as a negative effect of too much tolerance. She redirects the group towards Leyla – a muslim girls that recently arrived with her family and has been supported by Iskren. Leyla who being not pure Bulgarian but Muslim is an obvious impostor – she is among those who wear scarves and do not respect Bulgarian traditions. Obviously Plamena is in favour of the concept of proud Bulgaria/-clean of minorities and migrants, she struggles with the fact her friend Iskren has another friend who is Muslim. While sharing her point of view on non-Bulgarians, she shows the participants a girl in scarf at the other end of the café. This is Leyla.

The participants get to talk to Leyla (the Muslim girl). She explains that she’s not so close to ISKREN, he just helps them a lot in the difficult situation they are. This is how the conversation and the facilitator provoke Leyla in mentioning there has been a rise of the far right youth locally and some vandals attacks over the blind people community happened lately so local people can feel the aggression. Leyla mentions that Iskren was trying to fight that but he was not very successful and it influenced his mood. Both girls repeat Iskren was nervous and under pressure. He did not spend much time with them the previous night and he left early. Leyla asks if she can trust the group since they seem to be tolerant and caring people. She shares Iskren has given her something which she can only give to reliable people should something happens to him. It is a secret box but Leyla cannot open it and she gives it to the participants to see if they can use it somehow to help find Iskren. The box itself as a challenge provoke the intriguing moment and feeling of suspense in participants, maintaining a high level of engagement. Within the box there is a half of a QR code so the groups needs to find the missing piece...



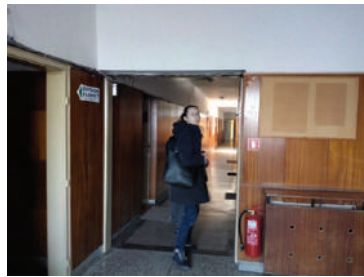
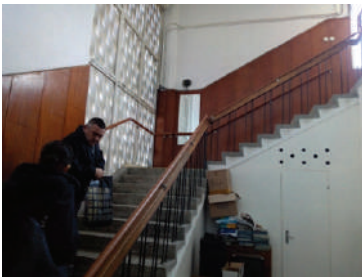
Final solution

AB4. Connecting clues - discovering the truth

The groups come together in the lobby where their quest had started earlier that day. The participants solve the QR code puzzle by scanning it with a phone and find a FB video of Iskren. They watch it on their phones. ISKREN explains that he had to run away as he became a protected witness against an organized Neo-nazi group popular with the so-called LUKOV march which is held every year in Sofia in February. They mainstream illegal and fake far right online content, provoke conflicts in the local communities and promote aggressive ways of dealing with different people in society based hatred and strive for a pure/perfect nation – their main targets were people of ethnic minorities (Roma and Turkish) and with disabilities. Iskren shares in the video that he helped the authorities destroying this group but it will take some time for the police to catch them all. That is why he will be absent for a while but it is for good.

Additional information about the venue:

Pictures from the stairs leading to the second floor where the chess room is.



Conclusions and evaluation

The facilitators congratulate the participants on successfully solving the mystery of the game and invite them inside the café to have a small talk about their experience. As the participants find their seats the facilitators introduce the actors and the whole crew. They start the debriefing session with a question to the participants of when and how they realized they are inside a game; at what point they realized that searching for Iskren is part of the game.

Structure of the feedback and evaluation session:

- questions about the general feeling of the participants;
- what they noticed and what impressed them;
- what the main message is;
- what social issues are dealt with in the game;
- If anything has surprised them within the game;
- If they have questions for the actors;
- If they have an aha moment and if yes, when and about what it was;
- If they will recommend the game to peers;
- If they agree to share their experience and record a testimonial video;

Depending on the group size the participants can be invited to join smaller groups led by particular actors and learn more about their personal stories.

List of roles and characters within the game

Name of participant	Role	Personality profile/relationship with the game character	Appears in episode/location
Cafer Saatchi	Musa	Turkish origin	A1
Kaloyan Yanakiev	Staff at the cloakroom	Works at the Blind community	A3 ad AB4
Stefani Roshkova	Staff at the Chess room	Works at the Blind community	B1
Adela Bozmarova	LeylaLeyla	Muslim migrant in the neighbourhood supported by ISKREN	B3
Iva Mengova	Bartender	Works at the Blind community	A1
Diyan	Bartender	Works at the Blind community Far right nationalist supporter	A1
Miroslav Todorov	Archery coach	Works at the Blind community	B2
Desislava Palashka	Maya Assistant to the archery coach	Visually impaired (-14 dioptries) but wears lenses and can work/move independently	B2

Name of participant	Role	Personality profile/relationship with the game character	Appears in episode/location
Simona Peneva	Plamena	Helps Iskren in his work with the blind people	B3
Boncho Bnchev	Iskren's father	Visually impaired	At the launch + A2
Stoyan	Showdown sportsperson	Visually impaired	A2
Eli	Showdown sportsperson	Visually impaired	A2
Spaena	Showdown sportsperson	Visually impaired	A2

Lessons learned/Challenges

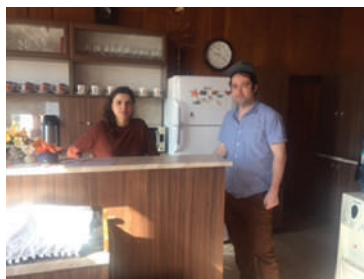
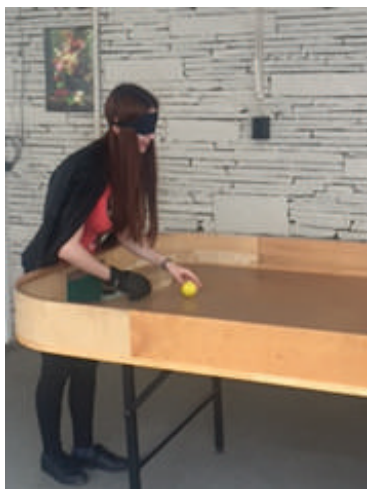
Having played the game more than 10 times throughout the project pilot phase IOA team has noticed several issues that need to be taken into consideration while preparing for such an event, namely:

- When working with schools, young people come in organized groups led by teachers. Sometimes they do not know where they are going or have limited knowledge of where and why their teachers take them there. This has major effect on their level of active involvement at the very beginning of the game and the facilitators need to be prepared to offer alternative and more attractive intro sessions to open the process and engage those participants from the start of the game;
- As the game starts naturally as a quest for a missing team member it has happened that some of the participants have no clue about that and they find it difficult to engage and ask questions/interrogate people from the venue. It is the role of the facilitator to try to engage them in the search for the missing ISKREN but it could also be assigned to the actors who can try to involve the participants into the process, too.;
- With regards the key issue at stake, it should be noted that sometimes some of the participants can express strong feelings/opinions about the main targets groups, especially the Turkish minority based on their own preconceptions. We have had people who ignored the Turkish component of the game and stepped back from the process or voiced their dislike. In such situations it is the facilitator's role and responsibility how and when to address the issue in a wider public. In our case, as it has been a single opinion we have not raised it in plenary at the end of the game but had a private chat with the participant after the game was over the intention being to focus everybody's attention to the situation of the blind community and raise as much as possible the

awareness on that rather than to engage in a debate with one person and leave all others passively listening to a heated debate they do not feel related to.

Pictures from the pilot game session on April 11th, 2019 with students and young people from Varna





Actors and participants at the end of one of the pilot game sessions





This material was written by Maria Marinova-Alkalay and Nora Stefanova.

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