**AI CHALLENGE Hackathon: Detailed Structure and Expectations**

**I. Purpose and Vision of the CHALLENGE Game**

The CHALLENGE (Creating Holistic Approaches for Learning, Liberty, and Equity in New Global Education) game was developed in response to a fundamental need: to create a reflective, participatory, and justice-oriented space for engaging with refugee education policy. Rooted in critical pedagogy and participatory action research (PAR), this simulation draws attention to the real-world implications of policy-making in refugee education contexts.

At its core, the CHALLENGE game intervenes in the silence and erasure that often characterizes refugee education within mainstream teacher education and policy circles. It offers a dynamic and immersive experience that exposes players to the contradictions, moral dilemmas, and political tensions embedded in refugee education policy. Through this game, refugee education is no longer a distant humanitarian concern or a passive object of study. It becomes a lived, contested, and highly political domain of action.

In the Republic of Bean—a fictional but deeply familiar setting shaped by historical exclusion, linguistic hegemony, and political instability—participants step into the roles of policymakers. The game invites them to make tough choices across seven policy domains under tight budget constraints, encouraging them to confront moral dilemmas, social tensions, and resource scarcity. Participants must grapple with competing demands and ideologies: the state's desire for control, citizens' fears of losing resources, and the human rights of displaced communities. These tensions mirror those seen across the globe, making the game both pedagogically powerful and politically relevant.

The CHALLENGE game is not merely a tool for learning; it is a mechanism for transformation. It surfaces ethical quandaries, challenges dominant paradigms, and foregrounds marginalized voices. It does not ask players to passively learn about refugee education; it asks them to participate in shaping it. It reveals how decisions made under the guise of neutrality—budgeting, curriculum design, certification—are deeply ideological and often exclusionary. In doing so, the game calls into question the very logics that guide educational systems: who belongs, who is served, and who is silenced.

In a world where refugee education is routinely reduced to integration strategies, and where policies often serve assimilation rather than liberation, this game makes space for radical rethinking. It asks players not only what is possible within the current system but also what justice would require beyond it. In that sense, CHALLENGE is both a mirror and a window: a mirror to reveal how our decisions reflect existing systems of power, and a window into what an education system truly committed to equity and pluralism might look like.

**II. Theoretical and Methodological Foundations**

CHALLENGE is grounded in several intersecting frameworks:

* **Critical Play (Flanagan, 2009):** Encourages players to subvert dominant ideologies through gameplay.
* **Participatory Action Research (Kemmis, Bradbury):** Participants are co-creators of knowledge.
* **Gamified Learning Theory (Landers, 2015):** Demonstrates how game mechanics shape engagement and values.
* **Transformational Play (Barab et al., 2010):** Players are positioned to act with agency and critically reflect.

By using games as data collection and learning environments, CHALLENGE leverages both emotional engagement and intellectual exploration. It aligns with scholarship calling for decolonized, community-centered, and justice-forward approaches to refugee education. Gameplay is both a site of inquiry and a mode of resistance. The structure of the game intentionally simulates tensions found in real-world decision-making environments: limited budgets, competing interests, policy trade-offs, and the invisibilization of certain voices.

**III. Game Structure and Playing Process**

The game unfolds over three main stages and is designed for teams of five. It is both collaborative and personal, analytical and emotional, and requires players to critically engage with the underlying social, political, and ethical dimensions of education policy. In the online version of the CHALLENGE game, four of the five players will be AI-generated agents and one will be a real participant. The core structure—three distinct phases—mirrors the physical version of the game but is adapted for digital interaction and AI-facilitated decision-making.

**A. Phase I: Scenario Reading and Individual Decision-Making (20 minutes)**

The game begins with the participant reading the fictional context of the **Republic of Bean**, which includes the socio-political background, the refugee crisis, and the parliamentary responsibility to reform the education system. This narrative establishes the ethical stakes, political dynamics, and the challenges of limited resources.

Once the scenario is reviewed, all five players—**the real participant and the four AI-generated agents**—individually select one option from each of the seven policy areas. These are:

1. Access to Education
2. Language Instruction
3. Teacher Training
4. Curriculum Adaptation
5. Psychosocial Support
6. Financial Support
7. Certification/Accreditation of Previous Education

Each policy option carries a budget cost (1, 2, or 3 units), and **no participant may exceed the 14-unit limit**. The interface must make this budget highly visible and continuously updated. This stage encourages personal ethical clarity before entering group dialogue. AI agents will make decisions informed by their programmed profiles (age, education, socioeconomic status, and political ideology) while avoiding identity categories like race, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation.

**B. Phase II: AI-Led Group Dialogue and Decision-Making (30 minutes)**

This is the collaborative, deliberative phase of the game. Using voice interaction, the real participant engages directly with the four AI agents in a moderated group conversation. Each AI agent will offer justifications for their policy choices based on their ideological perspective, professional background, and life circumstances. The participant is encouraged to explain and defend their own choices in return.

The objectives in this phase are:

* To **share justifications** for each selected policy option.
* To **negotiate trade-offs** and consider tensions among competing values (e.g., equity vs. efficiency).
* To collaboratively **vote on a final team policy package**.

Each agent, including the real participant, casts one vote for a policy option in each category. The majority vote determines the final selection. In the case of a tie, the AI moderator will randomly break the deadlock. The final group policy package must still fall within the strict 14-unit budget limit.

This phase simulates real-world policymaking where compromise, persuasion, and structural limitations converge. Participants will experience what it means to advocate within a politically diverse team under time and fiscal constraints.

**C. Phase III: Reflective Practice and Ethical Debriefing (Participant Only)**

After the final group policy package has been agreed upon, only the **real participant** will move forward into the **reflection phase**. This stage is central to the pedagogical purpose of the CHALLENGE game.

The participant will be prompted to respond to a curated set of reflective questions (included in the "questions.docx" attachment). These questions are designed to:

* Surface emotional responses to the simulation (e.g., guilt, compromise, pride, regret).
* Reveal assumptions challenged or reinforced during the game.
* Explore how power and position shaped one’s role in the group process.
* Ask the participant to evaluate whether their choices supported justice, inclusion, and refugee rights—or served other interests.
* Push toward imagining what education systems could look like if they were designed from the ground up for displaced communities.

Responses can be entered in written format or optionally recorded by voice. The system then generates AI-powered, personalized feedback based on both the participant’s decisions and their reflective input.

This closing stage is meant to foster critical consciousness. It encourages players to move beyond technocratic policy work and instead grapple with the deeper ethical implications of how education is structured, whom it serves, and whom it excludes.

In short, the AI CHALLENGE game is not just about policy design. It is about **rehearsing justice**, building coalitions across difference, and holding ourselves accountable to the futures we say we believe in.

**IV. The AI Version of the CHALLENGE Game**

In the AI version of the CHALLENGE game, the core principles and structure of the physical version are preserved, but technology is used to expand immersion, access, and dynamic engagement. The gameplay consists of three phases, mirroring the original design, and is played by five individuals—one real human participant and four AI-generated agents.

**1. Agent Composition and Identity Parameters** The four AI agents are created anew for each game. They each have distinct profiles, including:

* Age
* Educational level
* Occupation
* Socioeconomic status
* Political stance (e.g., conservative, moderate, socialist, neoliberal, liberal, etc.)

To preserve dignity and avoid essentialism, AI agents will not be assigned race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation. **These background characteristics will not be displayed to the real participant**. Only the agents' first names (or chosen identifiers) will appear in the interface. This ensures that the participant's engagement is driven by interaction and ideas, not assumptions based on identity.

**2. Phase I: Individual Decision-Making (20 minutes)** The real participant will begin the game by reading the Republic of Bean story, becoming familiar with the scenario, and selecting one policy option in each of the seven areas while remaining within the 14-unit budget. The interface will clearly display the remaining budget. Simultaneously, the four AI agents will also make their policy selections within the same constraints.

**3. Phase II: Group Discussion with AI Agents (30 minutes)** In this phase, the real participant engages in real-time dialogue with the four AI agents. Each side will present their justifications for the choices they made in each policy package. The participant interacts via voice, and the AI agents respond accordingly.

The group must then move toward finalizing one unified policy package for the Republic of Bean. Each player, including the participant and the AI agents, votes on the final selection for each policy area. The system tallies these votes to determine the final team decisions.

**4. Phase III: Reflection and Evaluation (Participant Only)** After the policy decisions are finalized, the real participant will receive a set of reflection questions (pre-defined and drawn from the "questions.docx" document). These must be answered without alteration. The participant will input responses either via written form or optional voice entry.

Once the game ends, the system will generate an **Evaluation Report** that includes:

* A summary of the **participant’s individual policy choices**.
* A brief **synthesis of the group discussion** and final policy package (without revealing AI agent profiles).
* The **exact reflection responses** from the participant, unedited.

This report must be automatically **sent to aturan@asu.edu and JANEL.WHITE@asu.edu**.

**5. Initial Data Collection (At Game Start)** Before gameplay begins, the platform must collect the following information from each real participant:

* Age
* Nationality
* Occupation
* Educational level
* Displacement experience (Yes/No or narrative response)
* Current location (city and country)

This data will help researchers and facilitators better understand how the participant’s positionality might shape their engagement with refugee education policy. This data must be added at the beginning of the report.

The AI CHALLENGE game is not an entertainment simulation. It is a vehicle for awakening, dialogue, and rethinking. It is an entry point into the complexities of inclusion, responsibility, and policymaking under constraint. And just like its physical version, it is designed not just to simulate change—but to inspire it.

Welcome to the digital Republic of Bean. Let your imagination serve justice.