



Memorandum

Author : HR Health, Safety & Wellbeing

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Subject : Evaluation Mindlab

Introduction

Between 31 October 2023 and 10 November 2023, the theatre performance Mindlab was performed 14 times by the TheaterMakers Radio Kootwijk at the EUR Pavilion. About 1,200¹ (+33%) employees, from nearly all EUR faculties and services, attended the performance. Measured in absolute numbers, Professional Services (343), ESHCC (149), ESE (143) and ESSB (123) had the largest number of visitors. Measured as a percentage of the faculties or departments, UB (80%), ESHCC (61%) and Professional Services (56%) had the highest participation rates. ISS (5%) and EUC (0%) were the least represented among visitors, most likely because the performance was only performed in Dutch and on campus Woudestein. In addition, some organisational units decided not to actively promote Mindlab among its employees, for example because they chose their own programme for improvement of social safety.

Immediately after each performance, employees were given the opportunity to talk about the performance. This could either be done in a private follow-up discussion with team members, or with a random group of visitors in the foyer of the theatre. Team discussions were chaired by the manager of the team or by an independent moderator. Discussion moderators were also present in the theatre for the foyer discussions.

Directly after participating in Mindlab, all visitors were asked to give feedback on the performance and the team discussion by means of a card with two questions. A total of 348 feedback cards were collected. Additionally, a survey was sent on 15 November to ask visitors about their experience. This survey was completed by 192 visitors. The feedback from both the handwritten cards and the survey have been used as the basis for this evaluation.

Organisation of the event

Much appreciation was expressed that Mindlab was performed on campus and the way everything was organised.

As a point of attention, it was indicated that people had hoped for more communication from the Executive Board (CvB) prior to the event. This could have added strength to the message and impact of Mindlab. Some respondents indicated that they had also missed the presence of the Executive Board and/or senior management at some of performances. This was seen as a missed opportunity.

¹ Estimate based on registrations

Performance

Overall, the performance was very well received. Most visitors indicated that the situations played in the performance were (unfortunately) very recognisable. As a result, the question with what feeling they left the performance was mostly assessed with a negative feeling. It was clearly a performance with impact that did not leave visitors unmoved.

To illustrate, some quotes of what was most remembered from the performance:

"Being a non-academic employee attending, the scene with the HR staff, confidential counsellor and administrative assistant resonated the most and was very recognisable. It was also interesting that at the end, no one in our group was beyond shocked by the performance - all the situations and scenes were recognisable. As we realised that, we were shocked by the extent to which we are desensitised to this kind of behaviour!"

"Almost everything was recognisable. Especially the overvaluation of research in relation to teaching. And the position of power of professors."

"The role of Von Meister who actually stood there and looked at it. Not a culprit, but not a solution either."

Most heard comment on the performance was that the story was oriented to the context of academic staff, and therefore less relatable to support staff. It was the impression that there was more support staff in attendance at the event. Therefore, the question was often asked whether the right target group was reached.

There was also feedback about the stereotypical approach from the white male and the PhD. Some respondents indicated that they would have liked to have seen a more nuanced picture. People missed the more subtle forms of socially undesirable behaviour such as micro-aggressions and subtle bullying behaviour in the storyline.

Follow-up discussions

The feedback on the follow-up discussions was mixed. The form in which the follow-up discussion took place appeared to be the main determinant of how the discussion was experienced.

The team discussions under the guidance of a discussion leader were generally assessed as very positive and valuable. Many people indicated that it led to beautiful insights and better mutual understanding.

"Yes, I enjoyed discussing this with colleagues afterwards. The atmosphere in our follow-up discussion was very pleasant: respectful and open; many colleagues showed vulnerability. The conversation also helped me 'recover' a bit from the impressive play."

The quality of the discussion leader, the short amount of time available, and a feeling of unsafety in the group due to the presence of a specific manager or team member were mentioned as factors that negatively impacted some discussions.

Follow-up discussions in the foyer were assessed slightly less positive. People felt that the setting in the foyer was less suitable for such a sensitive conversation. Unfortunately, a small group of respondents indicated that they missed the follow-up discussion completely, as there either was no discussion for them to join or because they did not feel a connection with the groups present in the foyer.

Follow-up

When asked what the visitors' wishes were for a follow-up, it was frequently stated that there is a great need to keep the topic "alive". The wish for a continued focus on social safety was frequently expressed.

Training and workshops on social safety were also frequently requested by respondents. For this purpose, prior to Mindlab, the [Social Safety Training Programme](#) has been compiled within TOP's training offer (EUR Learning & Career Centre). This programme overview is offered through TOP's website and aims to train employees, leaders and teams essential skills that promote social safety.

The role of leadership was mentioned by many respondents. Social safety is embedded in the Leadership Development Programme. During the Leadership Day on Thursday 23 November, the importance of social safety in the organisation and the role of leaders in it were discussed in detail. In the new leadership profile, competences were added that promote social safety, such as being a role model and a dependable leader. Additionally, a [conversation tool](#) was developed for managers to promote and properly conduct the conversation on social safety. Furthermore, the training offer and onboarding programme for new managers explicitly address the topic of social safety.

In the coming period, the HR Business Partners will discuss with the management teams of all faculties and departments how to translate Mindlab to their own faculty/department. Customised advice can be given per faculty or service. For example, one faculty/department may already have initiated (mandatory) active bystander training for every staff member. Others might not have addressed the topic so explicitly yet. The HR Business Partners will report back to the HR policy advisors on Social Safety and Health & Wellbeing what course the various organisational units want to take on this theme. Dependant on their feedback, customised advice can then be given and/or further tools and training developed in collaboration with the Learning & Career Centre and/or the Leadership Programme.