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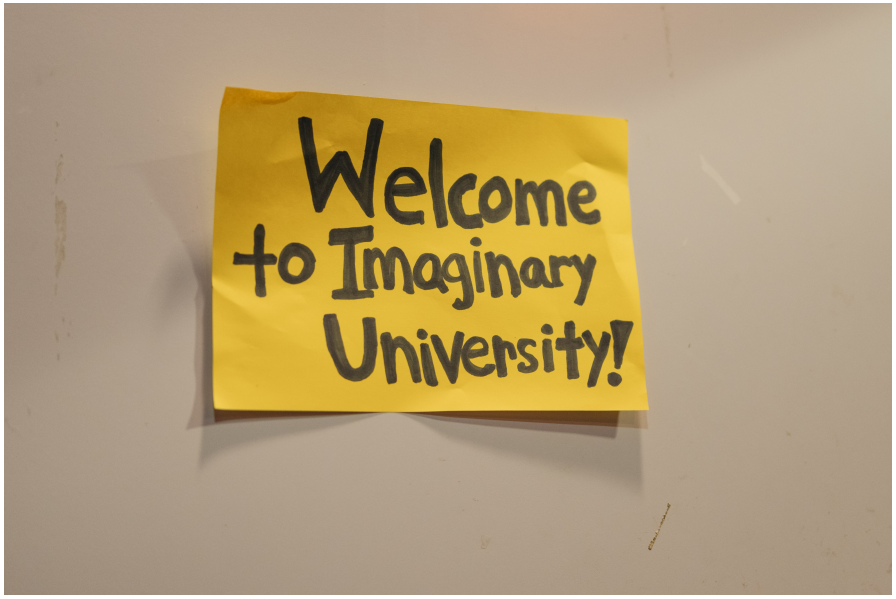
UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

Enacting Safer Spaces at University

A Legislative Theatre Event on Gender-Based Violence

Policy Report

24.1.2025



Legislative Theatre is an innovative, creative and participatory way of making policies. On January 16th, 2025, this legislative theatre event was held at the University of Amsterdam (UvA). Under the guidance of facilitators from TO Vienna, students from three different universities (UvA, ELTE in Budapest, PLUS in Salzburg) came together in the framework of an Erasmus+ exchange to create a play on barriers to an effective implementation plan of anti-harassment/Gender-Based Violence (GBV) policies in universities. After an introduction and a warm-up, the following play was shown:

PREVENTION: The play starts with a student association organizing welcome activities for newly arrived students. One of the students urges their colleagues for an anti-harassment policy for the upcoming party and an update for a very old version of the plan and is dismissed for that. During the party, the plan is on stage but not very visible and the president of the student union needs to be reminded of it in his speech. At the party, three students try to get help from the plan which is either not in the right language, spits out unattractive postcards or isn't suited for a queer student. At the end of the scene a potential harasser enters the party.

REPORTING: We see three different situations of reporting gender-based violence in university contexts: In the first, an international student finds it hard to find any information on reporting on university homepages at all and also doubts if reporting is a good idea. When finally deciding to report, the call can only be made in a foreign language. In the second, a queer students doesn't get trauma-informed consultation when reporting a case and due to lack of knowledge the case is always handed to the next person in a seemingly unending line of potentially responsible institutions. In the third, a PhD candidate is harassed by a professor, their supervisor, and wants to file a report with the dean who is a close friend of the professor.

GETTING AN ACTION PLAN: The play ends with students protesting for the implementation of an action plan against gender-based violence in their university and receive media attention. The dean invites some student representatives to a hearing in his office to listen them out. Capitalism and Bureaucracy have a tight hold on him.







After the play, the audience was invited to identify barriers/problems that hindered safer spaces in universities. In groups of two or three, they came up with rules and/or resources that would be necessary to ensure an effective implementation of anti-harassment plans, even though these rules might seem utopic or magic still. Some audience members then performed their ideas on stage. With each proposal (=intervention) we collected rules that would help this specific proposal to become real. Audience members wrote policy proposals based on the interventions they saw on stage. A team of policy makers (see below in commitment section) sorted all these proposals and summarized them in three policy proposals. We then discussed amendments and changes still necessary to make these proposals better, voted on the priority of their implementation and/or voiced our dissent. Each policy maker made specific and measurable commitments for action on at least one of the proposals.

Policy aiming at -	**Proposals and Amendments**	Priority votes	Number of Dissents
Policy 1 - staff	**Mandatory training for staff about inclusion and diversity** **Amendments by the audience:** – regular and in person – a report on harassment/GBV should be taken into account with the training (will be implemented, basic training on social safety) – there should be statistics available to staff and students based on the reports – bystander-training, for the whole university staff (not just academic staff, but also e.g. cleaning, administration and technical personel) – on the staff page, a certification: “trained staff on anti-harassment” – training to be more emotionally charged (include theatre, movies, documentaries) – students are part of the mandatory trainings (originally policy proposal 3)	33	-

	– make the curriculum about sexual harassment GBV as attractive as possible (originally an amendment to policy proposal 3 where audience stressed the interlinks of various proposals for maximum efficiency)		
Policy 2 - management	**Earmarking/Dedicating a big percentage of the university budget for social safety and a proper reporting system** **Amendments by the audience:** – have a clear definition on what social safety is, that is publicly known so we have the same understanding – financial transparency – clear procedure and transparency about the consequences and the reporting process – data that is comparable to other universities, standardised dataset that we all refer to – actionable transparency – Should be concise and easily readable	16	-
Policy 3 - students	**Organizing students to be part of the policy making and giving them access to information about sexual harassment** **Amendments by the audience:** – they should be paid for the work they are doing for the university – formally assure students that there won't be any future consequences/negative impact on their career chances – giving credits to students (everywhere)	18	3

	– give students a veto-right in university meetings – more binding power in students' participation, regulated in the law – student forum with a certain percentage of the student participation 1. too unspecific about the 2nd half of the proposal - we need clear info on how to do that (it would need clearness about how there will be access) 2. veto rights are risky, binding nature can be dangerous in the wrong (student) hands 3. the motivation to work on this should not have anything to do with money		







Commitments by Policy Team

Marieke ter Linden, Head of Urban Strategy at the City of Amsterdam	1. leave her email address to leave our suggestions 2. talking about the play and the policy recommendations 3. action center with prevent report will be informed about today's action and their address Date: 6 weeks from now (27th February 2025)
Laura Iqbal; Coordinator of Mentorship Program at the Dutch NGO "Vote for a Woman"	1. talk to the Head of Social Safety at University of Amsterdam (UvA) about normalising standing up against GBV, tips that are based on training (marginalized groups) Date: by the end of March
Sheila Chitanie; project staff at Emancipator, a Dutch NGO for Men's Emancipation	1. meeting the Head of Social Safety at UvA for a coffee, talking about men's emancipation and their alternatives Date: by the end of March
Franka Wegkamp; Policy officer for Diversity, Equality and Inclusion at the Faculty of Law, University of Amsterdam	1. Making the training mandatory for staff (not just on paper), hold people accountable when not participating 2. improve the accessibility of information about the reporting 3. have a more actionable plan Date: 6 weeks from now (27th February 2025)
Arjen Berkvens; coordinator of confidential advisors for social safety, University of Amsterdam	1. Royal Dutch Academy meeting on Jan 17th 2025, talking about this event and its results 2. being open for discussions 3. Making the training mandatory for staff (not just on paper), hold people accountable when not participating 4. improve the accessibility of information about the reporting 5. have a more actionable plan Date: 6 weeks from now (27th February 2025)
Dora Lillik;	1. reach out to the professor responsible for the sensitivity training at ELTE 2. make a statement with the Student Union and the whole university (Ethics Committee)

president of the student union in the faculty of pedagogy and psychology ELTE University (Budapest)	3. rising awareness with the student union about GBV, the definition of GBV and what steps can be taken (and which services there are) 4. problematic teacher behavior to be reviewed based on students' evaluation reports of courses, and turning to the dean if there is a repetitive behavior Date to call: 6 weeks from now (27th February 2025)
Linda Raule, Joschka Köck, Kiara Gezels; Legislative Theatre Practitioners; TdU Wien/Theatre of the Oppressed Vienna	1. Making sure the policy report reaches University of Salzburg (PLUS) and responsible people there. Date to call: 6 weeks from now (27th February 2025)





For more detailed information on the rule proposals by the audience in the play and/or individual audience policy proposals, please contact TO Vienna at office@tdu-wien.at.