

#RUseen:

An awareness campaign to improve inclusion at Radboud University

Interdisciplinary think tank, Radboud Honours Academy

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Table of contents

Introduction	3
Hashtag	4
Effects and risks	4
Posters	5
Poster 1	5
Poster 2	6
Poster 3	9
Effects and risks	10
Online posters	11
Effects and risks	11
Short video	12
Examples for short video	12
Effects and risks	13
Leaflets	14
Effects and risks	14
‘Exclusive eating’	15
Ideas	15
Effects and risks	16
Social media	17
Examples of texts	17
Effects and risks	19
Activities	20
Effects and risks	20
Conclusion	21
References	22

Introduction

To make sure the message concerning the importance of inclusion and raising awareness for this issue is heard by students and employees all across Radboud University, this think tank has developed a campaign. The main goal of the campaign is to raise awareness about the fact that in this day and age people are still being excluded and treated differently at Radboud University for who or what they are. This exclusion can both happen intentionally and unintentionally, but both have a negative impact on the atmosphere of Radboud University, making it a pressing issue. The goal of this campaign can be related back to Crosbie's (2005) learning circle. Bringing awareness facilitates the shift from the first phase, unknowingly unable, to knowingly unable and hopefully eventually to the final phase, where inclusive actions are practically automatic.

The main targets for the campaign are students at the Radboud University that do not have an explicit stance on the matter, and might be convinced into caring about this subject. They can be described as the silent majority. The students who are already aware of the exclusion and are actively working to improve inclusion can be used to spread the message of the campaign. On the other hand there are students who are actively against the idea of inclusion, but this campaign doesn't focus on them as it is believed that it is more important to focus on those who have not yet developed a clear view on inclusion. An important note here is that although the focus is on the students, the staff of Radboud University will also get influenced by the campaign.

The think tank has developed certain aspects to conduct this campaign. Some aspects of this campaign are meant to have a more subtle approach, for example the posters, stickers and a short video. These are aspects where students can choose for themselves if they want to look at it. Another part of the campaign however, is meant to have a more radical effect. A lot of the associations in Iceland were of the opinion that in order to invoke actual change in people, it is necessary to shock them and evoke certain emotions in them. This is what the aspect 'exclusive eating' aims to achieve. This plan is meant to make people realise the effect exclusion can have, by confronting them with it and letting them 'experience' unfair and irrelevant distinctions between groups of people. All of the aspects will be discussed in depth below.

Hashtag

One of the main focus points of the campaign is the hashtag #RUseen. A hashtag can give students the opportunity to share their story regarding exclusion on social media. The hashtag #RUseen was chosen because it perfectly describes the situation many students at the Radboud University face: a lot of them are not seen as who they are, but are instead not seen at all or seen through the biased views of others. It is also a 'catchy' hashtag, which makes it more noticeable and easy to remember.

Effects and risks

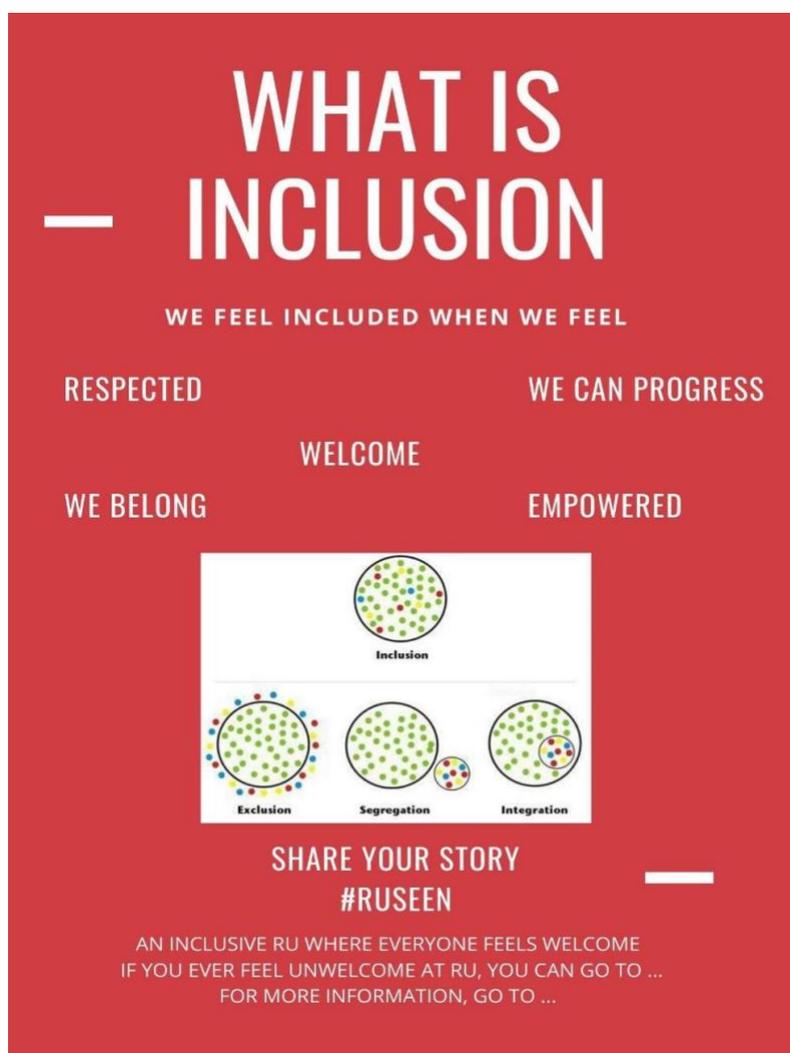
The main effect of this hashtag is to let it be used by students to share their story regarding exclusion, as has happened with #MeToo. It is a way for students to express their feelings regarding exclusion. The main risks are that it will not be used or it will be used but not in the right way. The best way to eliminate these risks is by letting a few students, beforehand chosen, start the hashtag by sharing their story. In this way the hashtag will be started with the right aim and will hopefully encourage other students to share their story using the hashtag.

Posters

Another aspect of the awareness campaign are posters. The aim of using posters in this campaign is to deliver the message of the campaign to all students in an attractive way. The posters should ideally be placed everywhere around the campus so that all students can see it. There are three different posters ideas that all highlight an important aspect of the campaign. The idea is to have posters in different forms, like the normal A3 form, but also in the big cardboard form that really stand out and are currently used for the sustainability campaign.

Poster 1

The first poster has the aim to let students understand what is really meant by inclusion. Inclusion is a word that can be interpreted in different ways and for the campaign to succeed, it is important that the students understand what the campaign is about. The poster does not contain a long definition, but words that are linked with inclusion, which makes it easy to read and understand. On the poster is also a picture which represents inclusion, so that the students also experience inclusion visually. The focus is on inclusion instead of exclusion, as inclusion is regarded more positive and something that students should be doing, as exclusion is something they should stop doing.



Poster 2

The second poster consists of stories of students regarding inclusion and it has two aims. On the one hand, it gives an opportunity for students to express their experiences regarding exclusion, and on the other hand it gives students who see the poster an idea of what their actions can mean for someone. Many students are not aware of the negative effect of some of the things they say or do. These posters with short stories, and possibly pictures or names, of students highlight the consequences of microaggressions. The idea is to use real stories and pictures/names of students at Radboud University, as this will represent the actual situation and there is no risk of recognising people who want to stay anonymous. The example stories and pictures, shown below, are actually not all real stories and the pictures are from a stock bank. There was not enough time to collect stories with pictures from students, but before the campaign is executed, this can be collected.

Possible stories with pictures:

- I am a bisexual man and sometimes feel not taken seriously because of this. Also people still make jokes with the words fag and gay, this hurts.



- I am an international student and with international events most people still talk in Dutch. I don't want to impose and make them switch languages, but it makes me feel left out.



- I have a disability and people tell me that they think I am doing a good job, but I am just going to classes like everyone else. They mean well but it makes me feel different from the rest of the students.



- My parents do not have a lot of money, so I have to loan everything. I don't want to spend it on expensive food, but in the Refter I buy it to fit in with the rest.



- I'm seen as a 'fat' woman. People don't take me seriously and say I should not be such a wuss. They also think I am lazy. These prejudices make me feel less of a woman.



- I am Dutch, but because of my skin color people often ask me the question: Where do you really come from? This makes me feel distant from my cultural identity and not accepted.



One of the example stories made into a poster:

A vertical poster for Radboud University. The top left section is dark blue with the text "Radboud University" in white. Below this is a white horizontal line. The main body of the poster is dark blue with large, bold, orange text that reads: "I AM A BISEXUAL MAN AND SOMETIMES FEEL NOT TAKEN SERIOUSLY BECAUSE OF THIS. ALSO PEOPLE STILL MAKE JOKES WITH THE WORDS FAG AND GAY, THIS HURTS." Below this text is another white horizontal line. At the bottom of the dark blue section, in white text, it says "SHARE YOUR STORY #RUSEEN". The bottom section of the poster is red with white text that reads: "AN INCLUSIVE RU WHERE EVERYONE FEELS WELCOME IF YOU EVER FEEL UNWELCOME AT RU, YOU CAN GO TO ... FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO ...". On the right side of the poster is a black and white portrait of a young man with short hair, wearing a striped t-shirt and a dark jacket, looking directly at the camera.

Poster 3

The third poster represents the norm that almost no one adheres to. The idea behind this poster is to show that students should not be thinking in norms, as everyone is unique. Thinking in norms leads to exclusion and making people feel unwelcome, and this is exactly what is meant to prevent. On the poster 'the norm' is shown, by having a drawing of a man and woman with words around them that represent the norm. The choice for a man and woman is because this is the conservative way of thinking about gender. Gender affects everyone at the campus because students either fall under the traditional binary definition of a man or a woman, or they do not by identifying as non-binary. The intention is to make the drawing with words in a way that it represents people who do not exist, as almost everyone sees a word that does not represent them. Furthermore, the drawing that were chosen on this example poster show a 'sexy' woman and a more 'strong' man. This also represents an biased idea of how a woman and man should look and behave. Below the words and the drawings, the message is stated that 'we should not think in norms to make everyone feel welcome'.

**SHOULD THIS BE THE NORM
AT RABDOUD UNIVERISTY?**

Long hair <175cm Pretty Make-up Sensitive Caring Hockey		White Young Straight Dutch Middle class Slim No disability Sporty No first generation student Parents still married		Short hair >180cm Handsome Muscular Tough Not emotional Soccer
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**NO! WE SHOULD NOT THINK IN
NORMS OR GROUPS AT ALL TO
MAKE EVERYONE FEEL WELCOME**

Share your story
#RUSeen

An inclusive RU where everyone feels welcome
If you ever feel unwelcome at RU, you can go to
...
For more information, go to ...

On every poster there is a standard box containing the aim of the campaign, the hashtag to share your story, the place where someone can go to if he or she feels unwelcome and a website for more information. The idea behind it is to link the three posters, so that the students know that it all belongs to one campaign. Moreover, the box gives the students the information where they can go to if they want to share their story regarding exclusion.

Effects and risks

As mentioned above, the aim of using posters in the campaign is to deliver the message of the campaign in three different ways. The effects with the posters are to let the students get acquainted with the idea of inclusion, to let them think about the things they say and to let them see that they should not be thinking in norms. But there are also risks involved in using these three posters. With posters there is a risk that students misinterpret the posters, as there is not much text on the posters and there is no room to explain the idea behind the posters. With the use of a standard box this risk is eliminated, as the standard box explains the general idea and it refers to a website where they can find more information.

Another risk is that people do not take the posters seriously. It is hard to eliminate this risk of using posters, but with making the posters as real as possible, this risk is hopefully reduced. Also, if they see the posters with the other aspects of the campaign, they hopefully realise that this is something they should be taking seriously.

An extra note on this aspect of the campaign is that Inge Blijenbergh is willing to help setting up the posters. She has experience with creating posters for an awareness campaign, as she helped organising a campaign for sexual harassment which eventually was not executed. She also shared her thoughts on social security at the Radboud University and stressed the importance of creating an open environment (Wieringa, 2019).

Online posters

Across campus there are multiple screens available where events are displayed and advertisements are shown. These screens should be used to deliver the message to the students. The main advantage of using these screens in addition to the posters is that it helps spreading the message even more. On these screens the second idea of the posters is shown with the different stories that can be found above. The same aims are achieved as the posters, namely giving students an opportunity to share their stories and let other students see what consequences their unintended actions have. When the same stories and pictures are used, this creates a uniform campaign that will be remembered. On the screens the same box of information about the campaign is added to again create that uniformness.

Effects and risks

The effects of these online posters is to let students think about what they say to other people and how this can affect them and to make them aware of microaggressions. There is again the risk that people misinterpret the posters and do not take them seriously. Because students of Radboud University will be used, if they are willing to participate, it will be attempted to eliminate these risks as it makes the poster real. The online posters will help to make the message clear and will result in people adapting their behavior.

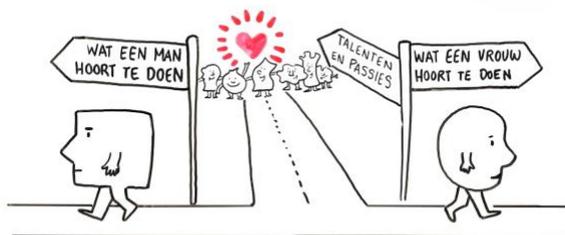
Short video

Another important aspect of the awareness campaign is a video. The aim of using a short video is to deliver the message in an attractive way, but also to inform about inclusion and microaggressions. This think tank suggests a video of approximately one and a half minute. This is enough to deliver the message and make it attracting enough for students to watch the whole video. To make it simple and available for everyone this think tank came up with the idea to do an animated video with a voice-over. Even blind people get informed with the video, because of the voice-over which is a main advantage. One disadvantage can be that the video contains animated people. The fact that it will limit the possibility to show emotions is considered. However, the purpose of the video is mostly informative, so this will not pose a big problem.

Radboud University has a department that creates videos with advertational purposes and can create this animated video. There are also other companies that can be considered, like Bordenstift or Cactusfilms. An example of what the animations and script should look like is found below.

Examples for short video

Animation



Script

In our society, and therefore also at this university, there are certain norms about how people should be. There is an image of the ideal man and woman. For both the perfect characteristics at RU are: white, young, straight, Dutch, middle class, slim, no disability, sporty, no first-generation student, parents still together. Men should also have: short hair, >180 cm, handsome, muscular, tough, not emotional and they should like soccer. For women the additions are: long hair, <175cm, pretty, make-up, sensitive, caring and they should like dancing. (shown are exaggerated drawings of perfect man and woman) But should we think in these norms? Are these the ideal people we want at the university? No, we should not think in these norms, because there is no standardised perfect person, we are all unique! We should all be inclusive! But what is that? This means that we should embrace the fact everyone has value to add and should feel respected, welcome, empowered, like they belong and can progress. However this is not possible when we are asked to fit into the norm that does not exist. We often think that we are being inclusive, but we still make mistakes which is human, however we can change this. For example microaggressions are still quite common.

These are remarks made that hurt people for example: where do you really come from? (to someone with a different skin color) So good that you study as well (to someone in a wheelchair) That is so gay (offensive to gay people) Are you a boy or a girl (to a transgender). These remarks can really hurt someone even though it is not intended. Try to keep this in mind and think about things before you say them.

Let go of the norm, be inclusive and make sure everyone is included at the university! (lots of different students being happy)

And at the end the information box we have used for the posters is shown to again unite the different aspects of the campaign and show people where they can go to.

Effects and risks

The effect of the video is to explain in an understandable way what inclusion is and how microaggressions still cause exclusion. It also delivers the message about the non-existing norm in an attractive way. There are also risks involved with a video. There will always be people who will not watch the entire video and will not get the message, but the thinktank believes that the video will still be watched entirely by a significant group of students.

Leaflets

Another aspect of the awareness campaign consists of handing out various leaflets to students on campus. The leaflets can be put in various places around campus, so their reach will be maximised.

A variety of leaflets can be printed, each one consisting of a general explanation of the meaning of inclusion and the awareness campaign itself. There will be about five different leaflets because 5 different personal stories will be used, however the explanations on all leaflets will be the same. The different leaflets and reading the personal stories will attract more attention and will help in creating awareness by sharing personal experiences.

Besides the explanation and personal experience, the leaflets explicitly call upon readers to be involved in creating an inclusive and welcoming university for everyone. As such, readers will be referred to the #RUseen website by a QR code, which is scannable by mobile phone cameras. The leaflets are a convenient way of learning about inclusion and attracting attention during everyday life on campus.

Effects and risks

The effects involved are the creation of awareness among students and other people on campus. Leaflets will be read by a great amount of people and, hopefully, they will be more aware about an inclusive environment on campus from then on.

There are no significant risks involved in handing out leaflets. Nevertheless, the possibility exists that people will not want to read or even accept pamphlets, so they will end up in the garbage. Although this small risk exists, this think tank believes that it is important to keep handing out pamphlets because they are a very effective way of campaigning and creating exposure for the campaign.

'Exclusive eating'

This will probably be the most noticeable part of the campaign because it is going to transform the Refter in a place full of visible exclusion. It is all about provoking people, which will help them understand the problem at the university with exclusion. When the idea is executed in the Refter and has proven to be a success, it can also be executed in Restaurant FNWI, The Yard, Het Gerecht and CultuurCafé.

The idea is that every table in De Refter will get stickers on it with strange unimportant differences between people. An example of this could be a table where only people wearing jeans are allowed to sit. The next table is only allowed for people wearing glasses. The table next to that will only be available for people wearing purple shoes. In addition, borders can be drawn on the floor. On one side of the border it is only allowed for people to stand with tattoos and on the other side for people without tattoos. All the ideas for excluding people and the ways to display it can be found below. It is very important that everything is clearly visible. This should be done by using a lot of colours, a lot of posters, a clearly visible theme, and big signs.

By doing so, students will notice these strange and unnecessary differences that are being made and they will start thinking about it. Probably, some people will get angry and will not understand. To help them understand, the hashtag and a link to the website are necessary to further inform those people and therefore the leaflets should be on the tables. The website will help them understand the goals of the campaign.

Ideas

Ideas for things to 'discriminate' on:

- Shoes
- Jeans
- Coloured spots in their eyes
- Eyebrows
- Short legs
- Glasses
- Tattoos
- People wearing their watch on their right/left wrist
- People wearing headphones/earphones/nothing
- Length of hair (only for people with hair with a length between 10 and 15 centimeters)

Ways to display:

- On the floor
- Signs hanging from the ceiling
- Creating lines at the food bars (for instance: white shoes/black shoes)
- Posters
- On the tables
- On the chairs

Effects and risks

To state this again, the big goal of this campaign in De Refter is to shock people in a way that they will rethink their own behaviour and the behaviour of others. The whole idea behind this aspect of the campaign is to be radical, to really start a conversation about excluding people at the university. The big risk is that it is too radical, that people cannot see the meaning behind it and will get angry. By leaving leaflets on the tables people can be informed behind the meaning and reduce this risk. It is time to try something different and radical to really change the mind of the students.

Social media

For this campaign, it is crucial to use social media to spread the message, since this allows the campaign to reach a lot of different people. In order to spread the news about the campaign, a text should be placed on the social media account of Radboud University, albeit Facebook, Instagram or other social media outlets. Also, there needs to be a text on a website created specifically for the campaign. Both of these texts can be found below.

Examples of texts

Text on social media

“This [period] the Radboud University wants to put a focus on the theme of inclusion. Nowadays there are still students and employees at the Radboud University who are being excluded and/or treated differently because of who they are. This can be for a variety of reasons, whether it be the colour of their skin, their sexual preference, background, religion, handicaps or any other reason. To exclude people because of any of these reasons is unacceptable for this day and age, and something has to be done about it. Through this campaign, we try to raise awareness for this issue, and we aim to make people more aware of the ways in which they might exclude people, albeit intentionally or unintentionally.

To fulfil the goal of making people more aware and make them more inclusive, we have spread flyers, posters and stickers all around Radboud University in the theme of #RUseen. The posters contain stories about people who have personal experiences with being excluded in order to get people to sympathise with those being excluded for unfair reasons. We also organised activities inside the Refter and [other locations] to show people what exclusion can feel like. Are you curious about all the things we put up? Go have a look around the Radboud campus or visit our website [...].”

Text on website:

About the project

We are a group of Bachelor students following the interdisciplinary Honours programme next to our study. We are comprised of students from all kinds of different studies, from psychology to political studies, medicine, law and more. Together we were tasked by the Radboud University to find a way to battle exclusion on the campus, a project called “a Campus for Everybody”. We spent the past half year studying this problem, thinking of possible solutions to these problems and turning all our knowledge into two end products: a report addressed to the Radboud University, containing advice for improving inclusion on our campus, as well as a campaign with the purpose of raising awareness among students for the glaring issue that is current-day exclusion on our university. This is an issue that is, despite what some might claim, still very present and very serious.

What is inclusion?

“Inclusion is about creating a space in which everyone can be themselves and express themselves freely, and are respected as such without infringing on the freedom of other people.”

The above is our interpretation of inclusion, and despite what some might think, this environment in which everyone can be themselves is not yet the reality at our University. A lot of people do not experience exclusion, because they are part of a majority in society, be it in numbers or in social influence. It is usually however the people that are not part of this majority that experience exclusion, in a variety of ways. This can be deliberately, when people are actively being treated worse for not belonging to a certain group in society. People can also be excluded through indeliberate ways, meaning that those who exclude them do not have the intention treat them differently, but perform actions and say words that hurt nonetheless. No matter in what way it happens though, exclusion is a horrible thing, and can deeply hurt people, as well as giving people belonging to minorities less opportunity to develop themselves. There is a pretty high chance you too once in your life have experienced exclusion, or perhaps (hopefully) unknowingly contributed to the problem of exclusion. This is why we aim to improve inclusion at the Radboud University.

How do we aim to achieve our goal?

As mentioned before, our plan to improve inclusion at the Radboud University consists of two things; a report addressed to the Radboud University, containing an in depth analysis of the problem and our recommendations for solving this issue, as well as a campaign mainly aimed at students who do not know a lot about this issue yet. The goal of this campaign is to make students more aware, both of the fact there still isn't as much inclusion on our campus as could and should be, but also that the things they might say or do to others can be hurtful, even if they don't realise it themselves.

One of the main focus points of our campaign is the hashtag #RUseen. We chose this hashtag because it perfectly describes the situation many students at the Radboud University face: a lot of them are not seen as who they are, but are instead not seen at all or seen through the biased views of others, often resulting in hurt feelings or people being treated differently for irrelevant reasons. As you may have already seen around the campus, we put this hashtag on all our media, such as:

- Stickers
- Flyers
- A little film about the ridiculousness of "the societal norm".
- Posters containing pictures of people who have experienced exclusion first-hand
- Screen texts with stories about people who have been excluded
- An action we set up in the Refter to directly confront people with the experience of exclusion.

If you haven't found any of these things yet, props to you for finding our website, seriously. But also: go check them out! Tell your friends about it too! The more people manage to see and spread our message, the more people will become aware of the issue of exclusion and be motivated to do something about, if only it is through changing their own behaviour towards others.

Effects and risks

There is very little risk involved with putting these texts online. The effect of the text on social media is that a lot more people can be reached via social media than with posters and flyers. Meanwhile, the text on the website has the effect that people who are genuinely interested in what the campaign aims to achieve can find a clear explanation for the campaign, which hopefully inspires them to change their behaviour.

Activities

As part of the campaign, this think tank suggests organising various complementary activities around campus. The first one is a series of lectures about inclusion and exclusion. Anyone who is interested, will be able to learn about inclusion and exclusion in general and best practices from inclusive environments. The university can invite different speakers, like someone from the Halkes netwerk, someone from a company that is focusing on inclusion etc. The second activity is a period where pens will be handed out to passers-by including the hashtag of the campaign. As all students can use a pen, it is likely that they will grab the pen and be reminded of the hashtag and maybe of the campaign as well.

Effects and risks

The supposed effects of various complementary activities are the possibility for everyone to learn and become aware of the concept of inclusion and exclusion and best practices to prevent yourself from excluding people on campus. The only risk possibly involved is that of a low attendance during lectures or other activities.

Conclusion

The awareness campaign described in this report will help provide a kick-start for a dialogue about inclusion and exclusion at Radboud University. Hopefully it will not only provide a dialogue, but as well a change in behavior. The campaign also provides a place where everyone can share their story and feel heard. And it also promotes a place where people can go to when they feel excluded. This will help the process of awareness about exclusion and will create a more open atmosphere at Radboud University.

As mentioned before and in '#RUseen: barriers to and solutions for improving inclusion at Radboud University' the campaign is a tool for working through the phases of the learning cycle mentioned in Crosbie (2005). The campaign will bring Radboud University to a stage of knowingly unable at first by creating a dialogue and informing about inclusion and exclusion. And for example the 'exclusive eating' part of the campaign will help with achieving stage 3, knowingly capable, because the students involved will have learned how exclusion comes about and are able to not exclude themselves. When the debate about inclusion and exclusion remains visible after the campaign and the social media part remains active eventually inclusion will come naturally.

The campaign is because of the overlap between all the different parts a united whole that will provide awareness regarding inclusion and exclusion. The execution of the campaign needs to be done carefully and with precision, because of the risk of negative responses by people against inclusion. Students of the think tank are willing to participate in the execution of the campaign and hope it will become a success with inclusion being put on the map.

References

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