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The Good Project

Newsletter: July 2014

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Dear Friend of The Good Project,

We hope that this newsletter finds you well! In this issue, we showcase the Professional Honor Foundation's Good Work workshops for different groups of professionals in The Netherlands. For our "Good Idea of the Month", we look at Compromised Work. Further, we also highlight our recent blogs. If you have ideas for future newsletters or would like your work to be highlighted, please email Paromita De at paromita_de@harvard.edu. Thank you and we hope you enjoy this issue of the newsletter!

Sincerely,
The Good Team

Professional Honor Foundation Bringing Good Work to Different Vocations in The Netherlands



When you think of the careers of a police officer, a physician, or a civil servant, you may picture professionals working at a lightning fast pace to keep up with the high pressures of their job. What you

may not immediately picture is any of these professionals taking time to sit with their peers and reflect on what challenges they face in their day-to-day work. While opportunities for reflection may not be abundant, they still are critical to the health of these professions.

The Professional Honor Foundation ([Stichting Beroepseer](#)), based in The Netherlands and led by Alexandrien van der Burgt and Thijs Jansen, has worked to include members of the medical, law enforcement, and government administration professions with that opportunity for reflection through workshops on Good Work. Together with Wiljan Hendriks, a Tilburg University researcher and former Visiting Fellow at the Good Project, and Hans Wilmink, a retired civil servant from the Ministry of Internal

Affairs, Alexandrien and Thijs have designed these workshops and included Good Work Toolkit materials such as the Value-Sort Activity and narratives into the curriculum. Through the workshops, participants discuss their professional identities and the ethical dilemmas that they may face on the job. For instance, civil servants examined the extent to which they show loyalty to the political strategy of their minister and the extent to which they show impartiality, in case there is a societal need endangered (or neglected) by the Ministry. Participants across different professions found the 3 E's of excellence, ethics, and engagement to be intriguing lenses through which to look at their work. As such, the Professional Honor Foundation hopes to provide broader workshops to serve other professions and to also expand into other formats such as lectures.

The extensive workshops for civil servants have inspired two of Jansen's students who graduated from Tilburg University to create a Good Work Toolkit for Civil Servants, written in Dutch. The students based the narratives in the Toolkit off of previous dilemmas they had heard from workshop participants. While the initial civil servant workshops involved members of one particular ministry of government in The Netherlands, the Professional Honor Foundation hopes that the new Good Work Toolkit for Civil Servants can be applied to civil servants across all divisions of government.

Finally, the Professional Honor Foundation has been instrumental in the publication of *The Alternative*, a Dutch book that showcases different teaching approaches and subject matter that challenge the status quo in current education practice. Lynn Barendsen and Wendy Fischman of the Good Project have contributed a chapter on the Good Work Toolkit to this book. Additionally, responses from an interview with Howard Gardner have also been incorporated as a chapter in the book. An international version of this book is currently being planned.

Good Idea of the Month: Compromised Work

For nearly 50 years, the news program "60 Minutes" has been a stalwart source of quality



journalism. It regularly ranks as one of the most viewed programs



on Sunday evening in the US and has received numerous accolades. Given this reputation, it came as a major shock to journalism professionals and the public alike when it was revealed that a story they aired, on security contractor Dylan Davies' account of the 2012 attack on the US Diplomatic Mission in Benghazi, Libya, was not based in any truth and that Davies had told others that he was actually not present at the site of the attack. Correspondent Lara Logan and a producer of the report were placed on "leave of absence" as a repercussion for their journalistic negligence. In an [opinion piece](#) published by the Columbia Journalism Review, Alicia Shepard cites an Icarian quality of getting "carried away on a story", possible political bias, and conflicting interests with the parent company of "60 Minutes" also being involved in the publication of Davies' book as factors leading to this occurrence of compromised work.

In the article [Compromised Work](#) by Howard Gardner, compromised work is defined as "work that is not, strictly speaking, illegal, but whose quality compromises the ethical core of a profession. ... our concern is with the journalist who makes up stories, the politician whose word has no warrant, the physician who fails to heed the latest medical innovations and thus provides substandard treatment. Each of these individuals may at one time have embraced core values-journalistic integrity, political veracity, medical acumen- but at some point turned his back on the profession (Gardner 2005)." When professionals who are familiar with the standards or principles for their field decide to compromise them, they may be looking for a shortcut to their desired product - such as an attention-grabbing news story, an increased number of patients seen in a day, a rise in donations to a political campaign. When actions are taken that lead to compromised work, the question that naturally arises is whether the ends justify the means. The consequences of compromised work can place more costs on the professional than any benefits the compromised work might have brought to him. To ensure that good work is done that not only upholds the standards of a profession but provides maximum benefit to all parties concerned - such as colleagues and the general public - professionals need to reflect on how compromised work may occur, how it can be prevented, and what impact it has on their work.

- What factors may lead to compromised work in a certain profession?
- How do we comprehend the impact of compromised work? Are there instances where compromised work actually provides maximum benefit to different parties

involved?

- What can be done to prevent compromised work in a profession?

Recent Blogs

[Combating Social Isolation Across Generations](#)

(June 17, 2014)

Jennifer Tu, Harvard College undergrad, shares insights gained from participating in and founding initiatives that connect the elderly to young people.

[2014 Commencement Speech Round-Up](#)

(June 27, 2014)

The Good Project shares some of this graduation season's highlights from commencement speakers.

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