

# Press release

Amsterdam, 18 May 2018



## **Conference on tackling sexual harassment and gender violence**

*New approaches for engaging with boys aged 12 – 18*

The European emancipation project IMAGINE concludes on 13<sup>th</sup> June in Amsterdam with an exciting international conference about positive ways to encourage boys and young men to challenge sexual harassment and gender violence. This conference for 200 participants launches the IMAGINE Toolkit, a key result of this partnership between Emancipator (NL), MÄN (SE) and The Good Lad Initiative (UK), that took off in 2016. The Toolkit contains practical tools for professionals that will help them engage boys and young men as part of the solution.

‘Engaging Boys and Young Men in the Age of #MeToo’ has a bilingual programme including talks, interactive workshops and panel discussions. Entrance to the conference is free: tickets are available on the Emancipator website.

### **Programme**

The conference offers professionals, policy makers, activists, social workers, teachers, youth workers and others a unique opportunity to learn more about IMAGINE’s methodology and what we have learnt over the last two years about masculinity and sexual violence. International academics and experts will also present key findings of new related research on what inspires men to challenge gender violence, young men and women’s strategies for handling online abuse, etc. There will also be a wide range of interactive workshops to attend, and much needed opportunities to network among professionals and activists of the European MenEngage network. The full programme will be available on the Emancipator website by the end of May.

### **Sexual violence**

Research is quite clear about it: one-third of all European women aged 15 years and above have experienced physical and sexual violence. The rate of sexual violence and harassment among young people is alarming. Most of the perpetrators are boys and men, although most boys and men are not perpetrators. There is growing evidence that interventions that focus on boys and young men are effective at reducing sexual violence and harassment. However, it is also clear that, in all European countries,

there are huge gaps in provision, which means that the root causes of this massive social and human rights issue are still not being tackled.

## IMAGINE

IMAGINE is a European collaboration that focuses on the prevention of sexual harassment and sexual violence against women and girls. Its main goal is to develop a methodology to inform and inspire to action boys between the ages of 12 to 18.

Over the past couple of years, peer educators have been leading workshops to explore sexual violence and sexual harassment with target groups of about 2,000 boys and young men. In many different settings, methods that enhance positive and non-violent masculinities, and promote gender equality, the rejection of sexual violence and sexual harassment have been introduced to the participants. The feedback and experiences of the peer educators have been distilled into the practical IMAGINE toolkit, which is intended to be used by professionals alongside Train the Trainer sessions.

The IMAGINE project and the conference are financed through the 'Citizens, Rights and Justice' programme of the European Commission and the municipality of Amsterdam.



## Emancipator

Emancipator is the Dutch organization for men and gender justice, on themes such as violence, work & care, sexuality and sexual diversity. We work to promote caring masculinities and preventing violent masculinities. We collaborate with women's and LGBTQIA\* organizations to challenge and transform gender stereotypes. In 2016 and 2017, Emancipator organized the Dutch White Ribbon Campaign called 'Stop Violence Against Women', in which more than 1000 men spoke out against violence. Emancipator is co-coordinator in MenEngage Europe.

Jens van Tricht, Director Emancipator - *"Men and boys need to respond to #MeToo and become part of the solution - taking practical steps to promote women's and girls' wellbeing and safety. Our facilitators are volunteer men who are skilled and passionate about creating safe spaces for young men and boys to explore gender equality and masculinity."*

## **The Good Lad Initiative**

Good Lad is an independent organization with over five years' experience in running workshops and educational programmes about positive masculinities and gender equality with boys and young men in schools, universities, workplaces and professional sports teams. Its evidence based interventions have been developed with leading academics and experts in gender and sexual discrimination from around the world. Critically both men and women work at every level of Good Lad to ensure its work is accountable to women.

David Bartlett, Director The Good Lad Initiative - *"Men and boys should act on issues of gender violence and gender equality alongside women and girls. Individual men should never be "gender heroes" saving the day against other sexist men. We all need to start with ourselves."*

## **MÄN**

MÄN is a non-profit, feminist organization founded in 1993 as a platform for men to take action against men's violence towards women. MÄN works to change destructive masculinity norms and reduce male violence. Its vision is an equal world free from violence.

Anna Lindqvist, Director MÄN - *"There are close links between traditional masculinities and gender violence. Men's acts of violence towards women, children and other men are fostered by powerful social norms that associate men with power, competition and dominance instead of caring and equality. Our workshops inspire them to create new social norms in which gender violence is completely unacceptable."*

## **MenEngage**

MenEngage is an alliance of NGOs working together with men and boys to promote gender equality. It is a global alliance made up of dozens of country networks spread across several regions of the world, with hundreds of non-governmental organizations, as well as UN partners.

MenEngage members work collectively and individually toward advancing gender justice, human rights and social justice to achieve a world in which all can enjoy healthy, fulfilling and equitable relationships and achieve their full potential.

Through our country-level and regional networks, MenEngage seeks to provide a collective voice on the need to engage men and boys in gender equality initiatives, to

build and improve the field of practice around engaging men in achieving gender justice, and advocating with policymakers at local, national, regional and international levels.

## Agenda

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Name event: Engaging Boys and Young Men in the Age of #MeToo

Type: Conference

Language: English and Dutch

Date: June 13<sup>th</sup> 2018

Time: 09:00 – 18:00

Location: Hotel Casa, Eerste Ringdijkstraat 4, Amsterdam, 1097 BC

Entrance: Tickets are free, but need to be shown

Tickets: [www.emancipator.nl](http://www.emancipator.nl)

## Not for publication

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Emancipator, MÄN and The Good Lad Initiative highly appreciate your editorial attention. Of course our organizations are open to discussing spin offs, discounts and prizes. We happily offer you the opportunity to make a film and/or photography report before and during our events.

Images and other footage is available in high resolution at [emancipator.nl](http://emancipator.nl), in the Press menu. This footage is royalty free, but can only be used if credits are included.

In case you publish an item about us, we highly appreciate an email notification at [communicatie@emancipator.nl](mailto:communicatie@emancipator.nl), preferably including a .pdf of the article and/or a link to the item.

For more information, interview requests, press cards and imagery, please visit <https://www.emancipator.nl/en/press/> or contact:

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