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Growing a Garden of Healthy Masculinities: Combating Homophobia in the Imagine Project Workshops

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Growing a Garden of Healthy Masculinities:
Combating Homophobia in the Imagine Project Workshops

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Table of Contents

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Working Definitions and Acronyms

SV&SH: Sexual violence and sexual Harassment.

LGBTQ+ : Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer. Umbrella term for non-straight, non-cis

individuals.

DESPOGI: Disadvantaged because of their Expression of Sexual Preference or Gender Identity. Used by the Global Alliance for LGBT Education to capture how homophobia impacts both those who identify with the LGBT umbrella and those who do not.

SGD: Sexual and Gender Diversity. Refers to non-straight, non-cis individuals.

Homophobia and Homonegativity: Homonegativity refers to a negative attitude regarding homosexual persons. It is sometimes used interchangeably with homophobia, although the term homophobia "traditionally connotes a mental disturbance based on an irrational fear of homosexuals" (Haney, 2016). The term homophobia has been critiqued for it's inaccurate representation of anti-gay attitudes, and failure to capture the true breadth of repercussions experienced by non-cis and non-straight individuals. In this paper I will use primarily the term homophobia because it was the term used by those I interviewed and the term used in the majority of the literature which I cite. When citing literature which uses the term homonegativity, I will use that term instead.

Abstract

This qualitative research study examines how peer educators can combat homophobia within the Imagine Project workshops. The Imagine Project is a three country initiative which aims to engage young men to work against sexual violence and sexual harassment through peer education. Combating homophobia is not stated as an official goal of the Imagine Project, and consequently it has not received that much attention within the workshop curriculum and preparation. A literature review and six interviews were conducted to gather information about homophobia, it's role within the Imagine Project workshops, and how it can be combated in that context. Relevant literature from gender studies on masculinity and homophobia was reviewed, as well as literature on conducting gender transformative work with adolescent boys and designing interventions which combat homophobia. This literature was applied to the findings which stemmed from interviews with five peer educators and the founder of Emancipator. This analysis led to the conclusion that homophobia shows up within the workshops in three ways: implicitly, explicitly, and through compulsory heterosexuality which workshop participants enforce. As peer educators have facilitated workshops and gained an understanding of the limitations and challenges which their original ambitions, they have redefined success and changed their priorities within the workshops. The current strategies which peer educators use to combat homophobia include: intentional use of language, maintaining open dialogue about homophobic attitudes, and sharing personal narratives or disclosing their own non-normative gender or sexual identity.

Keywords: Masculinity, homophobia, gender transformative, gender studies

Introduction

  Around the world sexual violence and sexual harassment (SV&SH) are a huge problem, and disproportionately perpetrators are men. Often SV&SH is presented as a women's problem and many initiatives aim to tackle these issues through empowering women and centering women's voices and stories. While projects which focus on women are very important, it is crucial to also enlist men as agents for change. For my ISP I worked with Emancipator, a Dutch organization which works to engage men against gender based violence. Emancipator is taking part in the Imagine Project, a three year initiative which aims to work with adolescent boys and young men to end SV&SH. The Imagine Project is a partnership between Emancipator, a British organization, and a Swedish organization, but when I refer to the Imagine Project or peer educators throughout this study I am only talking about the Dutch chapter of the project.

  The Imagine Project is ending this June and as the initiative draws to the end of its three year timeline, the peer educators and administrators have many lingering questions and many talk about hoping to continue this project and improve it using the knowledge they have gained. One theme which the peer educators and administrators would like to target going forward is homophobia within the workshops and producing a workshop curriculum which is less heteronormative. Through conversations with the program director of the Imagine Project, I decided to focus my research on masculinity, homophobia, and gender justice initiatives. Thus, this study is an effort to to explore ways peer educators can combat homophobia within the Imagine Project workshops. I aim to address these questions:

How are homophobia and masculinity related?
How are homophobia and sexual violence related?
How do peer educators define homophobia and does homophobia present itself in the Imagine workshops?
How do peer educators navigate and interrupt homophobia within the Imagine workshops?
What limitations do peer educators experience within the workshops and how do they define success in relation to those limitations?

What strategies from the literature are recommended to combat homophobia with young men and are they applicable for the Imagine Project?

I will answer these questions through literature review and oral history interviews. My literature review will survey theoretical work on the connections between masculinity, homophobia, and sexual violence and the practice based literature of organizations which do gender justice work. This literature will ground my analysis and also provide the Imagine Project team with a resource list for future planning. Through the oral history interviews I will analyze experiences peer educators have had in the past with homophobia in order to make recommendations for the future.

Methodology

Due to the fact that my research is about a specific organization and project within the

organization I chose my research question and my methods along with Henry, the Imagine Project

coordinator at Emancipator. He specified homophobia as a topic which needed more attention within the

Imagine Project. I pursued the topic and designed my question in such a way that I could do an extended

lit review of the strategies others are using to combat homophobia, and use interviews to understand

which strategies are applicable to the Imagine Project. I asked Henry to put me in touch with peer

educators who would be interested in being interviewed about homophobia and the Imagine Project. He

connected me with four peer educators that had expressed interest in this specific topic.

Internship Work

The Imagine Project is in its final year and Emancipator is hosting the capstone conference in

June, so they are very busy preparing for this large event. They gave me some tasks to help with

conference logistics. I ended up spending 3 days in the office helping with the conference:

April 9th : I designed a sheet giving directions from the airport to the conference center, and information
about public transportation and accessibility in Amsterdam (Appendix A).
April 11th : I accompanied Henry, Jens, and two other interns on a site visit to the conference center.
April 25th : I designed a sheet giving tourist information about Amsterdam with a specific section on
LGBTQ+ cafes, bar, and clubs (Appendix B).
I also compiled some resources about gender neutral bathrooms that Emancipator could use in the future
(Appendix C).

Interviews

I conducted interviews with four peer educators, Henry who is the project coordinator and a peer

educator, and Jens van Tricht who is the founder of Emancipator. These were interviews which focused

mostly on the strengths and challenges of the Imagine Project, homophobia within workshops, and

general experiences within workshops. In order to get a sense of who the peer educators are and their

specific relationships to this work I asked questions about what drew them to join the Imagine Project,

and how their conceptions of their own masculinity have been impacted by doing this work. I did one interview over the phone, two in the SIT office space, two in the Emancipator office space, and one in a cafe in Utrecht.

While the population I interviewed is not particularly vulnerable, I still took precautions to make sure this research was done in the most ethical fashion possible. Interview subjects were contacted by Jurhaily and therefore those who volunteered to be interviewed were self selecting to take part in this research. Before each interview I read the verbal consent form and gave my interviewees time to ask questions about the research before consenting. I got recorded verbal consent for every interview. All names have been changed expect for Jens van Tricht because he is a public figure.

Positionality and Assumptions

Throughout my research I tried to keep my own positionality and identities in mind. My position as an American definitely impacted both my perceptions and my assumptions, and meant that once I started interviews I realized that I didn't really understand how the Dutch education system works, or what the different reputations and expectations are of the different levels of secondary educations. Before I met any peer educators I had assumed that they were going to be mostly young men of color because the Emancipator office space is in a community center for migrant communities. Once I started doing interviews I realized that their office is just in that building but the Imagine Project isn't a part of that organization.

I am a white non-binary queer person, but am often read as a cis-woman. I did not disclose my non-normative sexuality or gender identity to my interviewees because it didn't feel important for our conversations. It is important to note that because I am not a man, and have been socialized as a women, I am writing about masculinity from the perspective someone who does not experience its demands first hand . My whiteness probably influenced how white peer educators talked about race in our interviews, and could have made my one interviewee of color less comfortable discussing racial issues.

Limitations

There were many limitations to this study starting with the time allotted to the project. If I had had more time I would have interviewed other social professionals working in the fields of gender transformative interventions, interviewed people from prominent Dutch LGBTQ+ organizations such as the COC, interviewed all of the peer educators instead of half of them, talked with teachers who have hosted the Imagine Project, and interviewed peer educators from the UK and Sweden. I also would've been interested in attending peer educator meetings, would love to attend the Imagine Project conference which is happening in June.

The topic which I was writing about, the Imagine Project, also poses limitations. It is a young initiative, only three years old, and peer educators have only been facilitating workshops for a year. Due to their lack of experience, and the limitations of my research, it was not plausible to draw broad conclusions. Another limitation of the project is that the peer educators are mostly white and from similar socioeconomic backgrounds, therefore their experiences of masculinity will be radically different than the young men of color they are often working with during the workshops. The Imagine Project is also working within the Dutch education system which presents limits to how in depth the workshops can go, and how long the peer educators spend with the workshop participants. It would have been valuable to attend actual Imagine Project workshops, but they are conducted in Dutch and therefore the language barrier made that unrealistic.

<u>Literature Review</u>

Context: The Imagine Project

In 2016 the "Inspiring Male Action on Gender Equality in Europe," or Imagine Project, was started by three organizations: Men for Gender Equality in Sweden, The Good Man project in the U.K., and Emancipator in the Netherlands. The Project's goal is to "develop a pan-European initiative for engaging men/boys to eliminate sexual harassment and sexual violence" ("IMAGINE Project A", 2015, pg. 2). Violence against women is a critical issue in Europe. In 2014, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights conducted a EU-wide survey on violence against women, and found that "one in three women (33%) has experienced physical and/or sexual violence since she was 15 years old" (FRA pg.21). Within the Netherlands, 45% of women have experienced "physical and/or sexual violence by a partner and/or non-partner since the age of 15" (FRA 2014 report, page 28, table 2.1; "IMAGINE Project A", 2015, pg. 4). While international legislation presents clear guidelines for combatting gendered violence and research shows that changing deeply entrenched gender norms is an essential part of addressing the problem, prevention methods often do not receive enough attention or financial support ("IMAGINE Project A", 2015, pg. 5). The Imagine Project aims to fill that gap for two target groups: young men and adolescent boys ages 12-18 and 18-30.

The project's method is training young men ages 18-30 as peer educators who can run workshops for high school aged boys/young men ages 12-18. By training peer educators, the project aims to reach a target group (men aged 18-30) who are often left out of these interventions, especially when they are no longer in school. The peer educators as well as the workshop participants will be challenged to think critically about masculinity and gender equality in their lives and work for change. The goal is adopt a non-hierarchical, participant led workshop structure, and bring the findings from the three countries together to create a international workshop model.

The project has three stages of implementation:

Stage one:
- ➢ Meeting with partner organizations to discuss current approaches to working with boys and men
- ➢ Recruiting and training ten peer educators in each country
- ➢ Peer educators and associate partners working together to create a model for working with teenage boys.

Stage two:
- ➢ Implementation of these workshops in the respective countries
- ➢ Ongoing action learning and research which will result in changes to the model
- ➢ Partnership between each peer educator and ten new peer educators who will facilitate the Imagine workshops in their communities.

Stage three:
- ➢ Working with associate partners to "adapt tools/models in their own context".
- ➢ Create a website to make the tools developed available to the public.
- ➢ Gather "civil society, funders, and decision makers at a pan-European conference" to discuss the project and tools developed ("IMAGINE Project A", 2015, pg. 2).

The Imagine Project is currently in its final phase and the culminating conference will be held in June,

2018. The Dutch Imagine Project team at Emancipator hopes to continue a local version of the project

after the EU initiative ends in June.

The Imagine Project workshop itself is a three hour curriculum which can be divided into one,

two, or three sessions. There is also a consolidated version of the workshop which is one hour long. The

complete workshop consists of 12 exercises. The workshops are interactive, aiming to promote group

dialogue through games and activities. An example is the "Body Sculpting (gender stereotypes & gender

equality)" exercise in which participants position each other as sculptures to enact different gender ideals:

> Participants form pairs and decide who will be person A and who will be person B. First, person A is instructed to position person B as the stereotypical man by telling him how to change his body posture. Secondly, person B is instructed to position person A as a man according to his own ideals ("IMAGINE Project B", 2016, pg. 14).

Further instructions note that facilitators can also prompt participants to position partner as, "a woman,

homosexual man, or another stereotypical character". The goal of this exercise is to promote discussion

about gender stereotypes, how gender is "represented by use of the body" , and talk about how one can

change their current appearance ("IMAGINE Project B", 2016, pg. 14). Other examples of exercises

include the "Boundaries (consent)" exercise in which participants walk towards each other until their

partner says stop, but then take one more step. This is used to promote conversations about consent and

boundaries ("IMAGINE Project B", 2016, pg. 20). Another exercise is the "Advertisement Quiz" in

which participants talk about the sexualization of women in the media ("IMAGINE Project B", 2016, pg.

15).

Within both the Imagine Project application to the European Commision and the description of

the workshop structure which I have cited above, there is no mention of homophobia or gender/sexual

diversity. Within the workshop guide, one of the goals stated is "Developing and adopting a positive and

female-friendly notion of masculinity" ("IMAGINE Project B", 2016, pg. 20). Promoting positive

masculinities is connected to reducing homophobia, but it's important to create masculinities which are

positive about all forms of *femininity*, not just when femininity is embodied by women. It is clear that

homophobia and gender/sexual diversity are not a focus within this particular initiative. There is a

separate world of advocacy and scholarship specifically concerned with LGBTQ equality and making

schools safe for LGBTQ young people, but those organizations are separate from work being done with

adolescent boys about sexual violence. Within the Dutch chapter of the Imagine Project homophobia has

been identified as a specific issue which needs more attention. Literature on gender transformative

interventions often does not present homophobia as a force which constructs masculinity. Within

advocacy materials homophobia is regarded as a fear or hate of LGBTQ+ people, instead of being

understood as a gendered practice (Sullivan, 2016). A large body of academic scholarship has examined

the relationship between homophobia and masculinity. I specifically looked at literature which analyzes

the role homophobia plays in establishing adolescent masculinities. I applied this literature to the Imagine

Project by drawing together advocacy materials with theory which explores the connections between

masculinity and homophobia. I started my search through this work by looking at foundational theory

from Masculinity Studies.

Hegemonic Masculinity

Within the Imagine workshops, peer educators aim to engage young men in discussion about normative expectations of masculinity. Many different scholars have attempted to define and explain how masculinity operates within society. R.W. Connell's (1987) theory of hegemonic masculinity and following revisions of the concept have been foundational to masculinity studies (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity is based on the argument that there is a hierarchy of performances of masculinity and that "heterosexual masculinities have more status and power than others" (Jewell et. al, 2012, pg. 209). The hegemonic standard in Western countries can be found in action movies like *Rambo*, which portray a white, heterosexual, able-bodied, cisgender, wealthy male protagonist who is physically dominant, and often violent. This standard can also be seen in male-centered professional sports or stories of successful businessmen or politicians (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, pg. 10; Sullivan, 2016, pg. 644). Normative masculinities are organized in relation to the hegemonic standard, with the hegemonic performance as something which masculinities aspire. This standard — which is virtually impossible for all people to embody — defines societal norms of masculinity and in turn defines which performances are subordinated, deviant, and socially unacceptable (Sullivan, 2016, pg. 645).

An important part of Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005) reconceptualization of hegemonic masculinity is its emphasis on different historical contexts producing different versions of hegemonic masculinities. Therefore, hegemonic masculinity is not a static construction, but instead a dynamic one that transforms in response to cultural context and social change. In this quotation, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argue that hegemonic masculinity is not a self reproducing form but has to be upheld:

> To sustain a given pattern of hegemony requires the policing of men as well as the exclusion or discrediting of women. Evidence of such mechanisms ranges from the discrediting of "soft" options in the "hard" world of international relations, security threats, and war (Hooper 2001), to homophobic assaults and murders (Tomsen 2002), all the way to the teasing of boys in school for

"sissiness" (Kimmel and Mahler 2003; Messerschmidt 2000) (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 16).

These extreme opposites of scale — international politics to schoolyard bullying —exhibit how pervasive hegemonic masculinity is and how it shapeshifts in different contexts. Writing on the relationship between masculinity and homophobia provides insight on how men must demonstrate their attempted performance to hegemonic masculinity to other men.

Masculinity and Homophobia

Michael Kimmel and C.J. Pascoe have both written on the linkages between homophobia, masculinity, and the violence enacted by young men. In his 1994 article "Masculinity as Homophobia" Kimmel defines homophobia as "the fear that other men will unmask us, emasculate us, reveal to us and the world that we do not measure up, that we are not real men. We are afraid to let other men see that fear" (Kimmel, 1994, pg. 10). Kimmel's definition presents homophobia as an individual's relationship to hegemonic masculinity and illustrates a constant struggle to maintain an impossible facade through marginalization of another identity. In order to deflect the possibility of being revealed as not a 'real man', men must constantly reaffirm their masculinity through proving their heterosexuality, which is accomplished by "exaggerating all the traditional rules of masculinity, including sexual predation with women. Homophobia and sexism go hand in hand" (Kimmel, 1994, pg. 11). As a consequence, women are also assigned a role in relation to hegemonic masculinity: to be a sex object (Buijs et. al, 2011).

This process starts from a young age. Kimmel writes that "As adolescents, we learn that our peers are a kind of gender police, constantly threatening to unmask us as feminine, as sissies" (Kimmel, 1994, pg. 11). C.J. Pascoe documented the details of adolescent boys' gender policing practices in her 2005 ethnography of a California high school, "Dude You're A Fag" and subsequent articles on the same topic (Pascoe 2005; Pascoe 2011) . Pascoe spent a year and a half in one school, regularly observing a various settings (including student government, Gay/Straight Alliance, auto-shop, and school dances) and conducted 49 interviews with students. Through her field work she found that the main way that boys

policed each others' genders was through "fag" discourse. This discourse constituted a certain kind of "gendered homophobia" which only applies to boys, primarily informing their performances of masculinity rather than sexuality. The young men in Pascoe's study actually wouldn't use "fag" to refer to someone who was gay, as long as this person was performing masculinity correctly. She writes that "the message absorbed by some of these teenage boys is that 'gay men can be masculine, just like you.' Instead of challenging gender inequality, this particular discourse of gay rights has reinscribed it" (Pascoe, 2005, pg. 342). The continuation of misogyny alongside conditional acceptance of gay men exhibits how hegemonic masculinity can adapt to societal shifts, a process I will explore further later on (Sullivan, 2016). While gay men who are traditionally 'masculine' are somewhat accepted, for those who do stray from gender norms, or are labeled as such, consequences can be dire.

The fag discourse simultaneously hurts both young men and young women. Being labeled as "deviant" was socially detrimental to adolescent boys because "such a label effectively negate[d] their humanness" (Pascoe, 2011, pg. 181). In order to avoid being permanently labeled by the "fag" discourse, boys took part in cross-gender rituals which affirmed their heterosexuality. Pascoe draws on Adrienne Rich's concept of "compulsory heterosexuality" to describe this process, which is "not only about expressing love, desire, and intimacy, but about showing a sexualized dominance over girls' bodies" (Pascoe, 2011, pg. 179). Accordingly the same processes which Kimmel describes as upholding normative masculinity generally are reflected in the high school setting observed by Pascoe. Compulsory heterosexuality is a concept which was useful when analyzing the peer educators' experiences with heteronormativity in the workshops. Heteronormativity refers to the ways in which social institutions and policies uphold the belief that there are two binary genders: man/male and women/female. This belief is followed by the assumption that all romantic or sexual partnerships will be between a man and a woman. These beliefs form the foundation for normative gender roles and stretch into all aspects of society, from how people envision the timeline of their lives, to who is recognized as legitimate by the state

("Interrupting Heteronormativity", 2004, pg. 3). Heteronormativity is often not recognized as a site of homophobia because it is hyper normalized in society, and it gains even more power in its subtlety. Hence it is crucial to interrupt heteronormativity and reify it for a heterosexual audience.

Theories of Homonegativity

In the article, "Modifying Heterosexuals' Negative Attitudes and Behaviors Towards Gay Men and Lesbian Women" Jewell, Morrison, and Gazzola stress the importance of grounding interventions against homonegativity in theories of why it occurs. They define four schools of thought for theories of why homonegativity occurs: personal identity, gender belief system, hegemonic masculinity, and modern homonegativity. The work which I have outlined above mainly employs the hegemonic masculinity and gender belief system theories. Hegemonic masculinity theory explains homonegativity through people's need to organize the world into hierarchies. Gender belief system theory addresses cultural origins of homonegativity, and explains homonegativity as a result of heterosexual's attachment to traditional gender roles "wherein sexual minorities are perceived to violate normative expectations of masculinity and femininity" (Jewell et. al, 2012, pg. 208). The functional approach to prejudice captures how homonegativity can play a role in the maintenance of one's identity or self esteem. This can be expressed through moral or religious beliefs, or it can be employed defensively or socially. Therefore an individual can plausibly not endorse hateful attitudes towards sexual minorities "but may engage in homonegativity solely to fulfill their social needs" (Jewell et. al, 2012, pg. 208). The theory of modern homonegativity explains how individuals who perceive themselves as egalitarian can harbor subtle resentment or prejudice against sexual minorities. This form of homonegativity stems from beliefs that discrimination against LGBTQ+ people is a thing of the past, and that LGBTQ+ people "exaggerate the importance of their sexual orientation which prevents them from assimilating into mainstream culture" (Jewell et. al, 2012, pg. 209). As LGBTQ+ rights have become more mainstream and overt expressions of

homonegativity become less socially acceptable, homonegativity persists in subtle ways and is hidden under the auspices of liberalism and tolerance.

<div align="center">*Inclusive Masculinities and Emergent Homophobias*</div>

In her 2016 article "Rethinking Homophobia and Deviant Youth Masculinities" Amie Sullivan explores how emphasis of progress within scholarship on these masculinities obscures the marginalization still experienced by LGBTQ+ youth. Literature on "inclusive masculinities" posits that homophobia is no longer central to dominant constructions of masculinities. These studies occur at the same time as increased visibility of LGBTQ+ people within the media and politics. While these events can paint a picture of newfound equality, there is still ample evidence that we are far from achieving acceptance or parity. While the social visibility of traditional forms of homophobia such as "blatant harassment and assault [are declining]...homophobias and gender policing still exist, but in new forms" (Sullivan, 2016, 648). Sullivan uses Pascoe's theory of "fag" discourse and A. Stein's theory of "emergent homophobias" to critique inclusive masculinities theory and exhibit where work still needs to be done. The theory of emergent homophobias is defined as "the subtle and often invisible ways that people subscribe to heteronormativity and may even unintentionally marginalize sexual minority youth" (Sullivan, 2016, 649). These two authors, Pascoe and Stein, center the need to "look at homophobia as a gendered practice rather than the simple assessment that straight men are fearful of gay men." This distinction is central to understanding how homophobia operates within the the Imagine workshops and how peer educators conceptualize homophobia. Many people do not account for the gendered aspect of homophobia, and regard it as only this fear of gay men. In Dutch society this distinction also holds a lot of salience.

The Dutch Context: LGBTQ+ Rights Discourse and National Identity

In order to capture the complexities of combating homophobia in the Netherlands, it is important to understand how LGBTQ+ right are connected to constructions of Dutch national identity. They do this primarily through the discourse that the Netherlands is a very progressive, LGBTQ+ friendly country. This discourse has become a source of "cultural citizenship", weaponized against immigrants and Muslims and used to construct "the liberal Dutch and the backwards other"(Buijs et. al, 2011, pg. 633). In the article "'As long as they keep away from me': The paradox of anti-gay violence in a gay-friendly country" (2011) Buijs, Hekma, and Duyvendak conducted a fascinating study that seeks to understand how and why anti-gay violence occurs within a country with a dominant gay-friendly discourse. To conduct this study, they interviewed convicted perpetrators of anti-gay violence, facilitated focus groups of young Dutch men with migrant backgrounds who were from "'risk groups' ([individuals] who meet the profile of potential perpetrators, but who have probably not actually committed violence)" (Buijs et. al, 2011, pg. 634), and conducted a survey in Amsterdam secondary schools which was completed by 517 students.

Through this study, the researchers found that acceptance of homosexuality is conditional across social groups and deviations from certain norms invoke resentment. The researchers identified four aspects of male homosexuality which were specifically charged: anal sex, attempts to seduce, public displays of affection, and feminine behavior. Each of these aspects were offensive to the study participants because they trouble deeply-held beliefs around gender. For example, in the section on attempts to seduce, heterosexual men expressed a deep fear of becoming the sex object of a homosexual man because, "[they] do not want to be forced into a role that they perceive as feminine" (Buijs et. al, 2011 pg. 640). This example shows how homophobia is connected to misogyny through mens assertion of women's role as sex objects.

For Amsterdam students who completed the survey, gender-deviant behavior was considered more of a problem than non-normative sexualities:

> A majority of secondary school boys (53.5%) indicate [they would] accept a masculine gay boy as a classmate, but only 40.3 per cent would accept a feminine gay boy. Interestingly, a feminine straight boy is not accepted much more: barely 41.5 percent of the boys would accept him (Buijs et. al, 2011, pg. 636).

The researchers reported that students reported high percentages of acceptance of homosexuality in general terms. However, when other dimensions, such as straying from masculine gender norms, were introduced, statistics decreased. Even those who had committed extreme violence towards gay men expressed that they had "no problem with homosexuals" (Buijs et. al, 2011, pg. 643). They expressed pride about living in the Netherlands, which is a "gay-friendly nation" (Buijs et. al, 2011, pg. 643). They were able to justify their violence alongside that 'pride' because the gay men they had attacked had transgressed the social norms that these men projected onto them. This research demonstrates that while tolerance and acceptance of LGBTQ+ populations is constructed as part of Dutch national identity, "the formulated conditions for 'acceptable homosexuality' are strongly related to traditional norms of gender and sexuality, proving that the gay-friendly discourse dominant in Dutch society does not seriously challenge the true causes of homonegativity" (Buijs et. al, 2011, pg. 643). This reality is hidden through racist discourses of Dutch exceptionalism. Therefore to truly change homonegative attitudes in the Netherlands, gender norms and expectations, and Dutch racism will have to be addressed.

The Dutch Context: LGBTQ+ / DESPOGI Education

The 2017 Global Alliance for LGBT Education (GALE) European report includes helpful information about education on sexual and gender diversity in the Netherlands. The report broadens its focus by not using the LGBTIQ+ acronym to describes the study's beneficiaries but instead using acronym DESPOGI which means "Disadvantaged because of their Expression of Sexual Preference or Gender Identity". In the introduction it is noted that DESPOGI includes, "heterosexual" and "cisgender"

identified students who display non-heteronormative gender behavior because "the norm of heterosexuality marginalizes a large section of emotions and behavior far beyond just LGBTIQ+ identities"(Dankmeijer, 2017, pg. 6-7). The Netherlands was marked as a 'supportive' country for DESPOGI and got a 95% score on the "GALE Right to Education Checklist". The GALE Report reviewed a variety of sources as well as the aforementioned checklist to build a picture of the status of DESPOGI education and inclusion in the Netherlands.

Bullying of Dutch LGB students has been measured in several studies. The latest report on sexuality among Dutch youth under 25 (2017) reported that, "25% of the LGB boys and 11% of the LGB girls indicated they were bullied (De Graaf et al, 2017, p. 41). Two in five gay boys have been called names in the past year, one in six was threatened and one in nine was kicked and hit because he was gay (ibid, p. 57)" (Dankmeijer, 2017, pg. 235). While there haven't been studies done which look at bullying of students who are gender deviant but don't identify as LGBTQ+, the finding that "bullying seems to be related to gender, mostly expressed through the derogative name-calling (homo, mietje [=little sodomite, effeminate])" (Dankmeijer, 2017, pg. 235), supports the assumption that those who deviate from gender norms will be at a higher risk for bullying.

While there is a national mandate to include gender and sexual diversity in all schools' social curricula, the actual execution of this mandate is left to individual teachers who don't usually receive external support. Alongside this, the culture around education in the Netherlands prioritizes high quality and rigorous academic courses, and does not emphasize school as a site of possible social change. The result is that "the School Inspectorate treats Language and Arithmetic as priority topics to supervise with strict guidelines as to the quality of education, while social safety is supervised as a secondary topic and there are no quality guidelines for how to implement this (comment VO-raad and EduDivers, 2017)" (Dankmeijer, 2017, pg. 233). Therefore while the Dutch government has expressed the wish and need to

prioritize respect for sexual diversity, the actual systematic attention needed to make this goal a reality has

not been displayed (Dankmeijer, 2017, pg. 233).

The GALE report (2017) recommendations for the Netherlands focus more on school

environment, curriculum, and teacher training than on intervention methods. This offered a helpful

macro-perspective which adds depth to my understanding of the structural limitations in which the

Imagine Project workshops occur. The recommendations are as follows:

> 1. Make attention for DESPOGI issues a priority for each department in the Ministry of
> Education
> 2. Stimulate and support educational publishers to develop DESPOGI inclusive curricula for each
> education sector
> 3. Stimulate more strongly that attention to pro-social policies and DESPOGI is integrated in
> teacher training institutes by integrating it more clearly into the "Generic Knowledge Basis" and
> in the database http://www.tosv.nl/, and initiate projects to develop good practices in teacher
> training institutions
> 4. Devote a chapter in the new National Register for Teachers (lerarenregister) to social safety
> and make sure DESPOGI are part of this chapter, monitor to what extent educational staff is
> trained to be DESPOGI inclusive and take measures if this does not increase sufficiently
> 5. Do research on effect of interventions and systematically improve impact
> 6. Monitor the progress of the government strategy
> 7. Include DESPOGI in the monitoring reports on the Convention against Discrimination in
> Education and Sexual and Gender Diversity 4 (Dankmeijer, 2017, pg. 238)

Because of the connections between heteronormativity, hegemonic masculinity, homophobia, and

SV&SH more inclusion of gender and sexual diversity within school curriculums and teacher training

could create a more gender equitable climate among young people. Within the Imagine Project gender

equality is presented as the road to ending SV&SH. Therefore if these recommendations were fully

implemented it's possible that they would help to combat SV&SH.

Lessons from Gender Transformative Methods Analysis

Within the Imagine Project proposal, it is mentioned that this project is part of an emerging field

of initiatives which aim to engage men in Europe against sexual violence and sexual harassment. In the

past, all attention around sexual violence prevention was focused on empowering women, not on

engaging men. Within my interviews, multiple peer educators said that The Imagine Project employs a "gender transformative approach" to working for change. Gender transformative programs seek to, "reshape gender relations to be more gender equitable, largely through approaches that 'free both women and men from the impact of destructive gender and sexual norms' (10)" (Dworkin, Fleming, & Colvin, 2015, pg. 1). While gender transformative approaches are very important for increasing attitudes bolstering gender equality there are still many aspects of the gender transformative approach which need to be improved. Four areas which limit gender transformative programming were identified by Shari L. Dworkin , Paul J. Fleming & Christopher J. Colvin (2015),

> (1) an overemphasis on harmful masculinities, (2) privileging a gender lens over an intersectional perspective, (3) struggle among some men with a newly democratising gender order and (4) lack of clarity on how to sustain changes in masculinities after programmes end (Dorkin et. al, 2015, pg. 5).

One area which is highlighted within the section on intersectionality is gender and sexual diversity. Gender transformative programming tends to center gender and does not interrogate the ways that race, class, and other social locations interact with gender to produce specific outcomes and experiences. Often gender transformative programs "[privilege] heteronormative masculinities and cisgender men" (Dworkin et. al, 2015, pg. 7). By recognizing the intersectionality of masculinities with other social locations, gender transformative programs would be strengthened, and become more effective at reaching their goal of an equitable society for all. The article concludes that future programs should work to be "less focused on cisgender men and heteronormative notions of gender and sexuality, and make conceptual use of the full possibilities implied by the terms 'sex' and 'gender'" (Dworkin et. al, 2015, pg. 12). While they suggest that interventions about masculinity can learn from conceptions of sex and gender outside of heteronormativity there aren't clear suggestions on how this should happen. In literature which specifically focuses on gender transformative approaches with young men there are some more concrete suggestions.

Practice Based Materials

The Imagine Project grounds its mission and methods in the "literature & practice of positive masculinities" ("IMAGINE Project A", 2015, pg. 6). This field was pioneered by practitioners such as Jackson Katz and Tony Porter in the US, as well as organizations such as Men for Gender Equality in Sweden (another organization involved with the Imagine Project), Promundo in Brazil/US, and Sonke Gender Justice in South Africa ("IMAGINE Project A", 2015, pg. 6). While Katz and Porter both talk extensively about changing gender norms, they don't write specifically about increasing the acceptance of gender and sexual diversity among young men. Sonke Gender Justice has a website with helpful materials around gender and sexual diversity and working within faith communities ("Faith, Gender, & Sexuality, 2016). I found the most directly applicable materials through Promundo's website. I also drew from literature published by Rutgers, an organization working for international sexual and reproductive health, and LGBTQ education organizationGALE. In these materials I looked for sections which talked about working with young men around gender and sexual diversity, as well as filtering for the word 'homophobia' and seeing in what contexts it was mentioned. I also looked at writing about fostering acceptance for gender and sexual diversity more generally and saw how the conclusions drawn from those materials could be applied to working with young men and boys within the Imagine Project.

Promundo has published a general guide to working with young men and boys, entitled "Adolescent Boys and Young Men: Engaging Them as supporters of Gender Equality and Health and Understanding their Vulnerabilities". This report seeks to impart the importance of engaging young men "as allies to achieve gender equality and as supporters of women's and girls' empowerment" (Kato-Wallace et. al, 2015, pg. 13). Within each section of the report, a topic-specific impact of homophobia is mentioned. For example, the section on sexuality mentions that youth who are attracted to people of their same sex experience additional barriers to reproductive health support because of homophobia, whereas the section on sexual violence talks about how deep-seated homophobia can

prevent young men from speaking out against abuse and sexual exploitation. This gives a multifaceted (albeit fragmented) picture of the ways homophobia impacts masculinity, including effects that on the surface might not seem connected. The actual section on gender and sexual diversity is quite short in comparison to other sections. It is stated that boys must be engaged as allies in order to fight stigma against LGBT individuals, and that interventions should, "provoke critical reflection about the links between homophobia and restrictive gender roles" (Kato-Wallace et. al, 2015, pg. 69). There are not any specific recommendations for how to reach those goals, expect for a brief case study of a German peer education program. This program is called "Aufklärungsprojekte" or "Awareness Project" and is a initiative where student facilitators often share stories from their own lives in order to help workshop participants connect to the topics on a personal level (Kato-Wallace et. al, 2015, pg. 69).

The Rutgers (2016) report "Adolescent Boys and Young Men - Sexuality and Relationships" cites Promundo as an important source for it's research, but its work takes on a somewhat different format and focus. This report is a resource guide for anyone (teachers, counselors, social professionals) working with adolescent boys around sexuality and explains the specific vulnerabilities and challenges faced by young men during their teenage years. There is a chapter on topics of interest with specific sections on boys, girls, peer pressure, love, and sexual and gender diversity. Within the gender and sexual diversity section, there is a list of possible topics to focus on, a list of questions frequently asked by young men about gender and sexual diversity, and recommendations for facilitators. The tips for facilitators section offers a simple overview of strategies, and I have found very similar recommendations in multiple sources. I have reprinted the entire list here because each guideline will be applicable throughout my analysis:

➢ It is good for teachers, social and health workers to first go through a gender transformative process themselves. Do you have biases yourself? Are you comfortable to talk about sexual and gender identity and sex in a broader sense? If not, are you the right person to discuss these sensitive issues, or should you leave it to someone who does feel comfortable and equipped?
➢ If you do feel comfortable to talk about sexuality and differences, it is important to know that creating a safe space in which diversity can be discussed without prejudice and discrimination is crucial. If boys do not feel safe in a group, it is not likely that you will get genuine discussions in which diversity can be explored without judgement.
➢ Before starting any session, it is important to set ground rules in a participatory manner.

➢ Boys should agree these rules, based on human rights principles like equality, respect and
➢ responsibility. Establishing trust and some clear boundaries in a group is important before
➢ sensitive issues can be discussed.
➢ Avoid gender stereotypes and talk in a neutral manner. If some boys express homophobic or other feelings, do not put them down, and share that everyone is entitled to their own feelings and opinions, but that discrimination is unacceptable. Remind them of the ground rules they set themselves and that everyone should feel safe in the group.
➢ Through participatory exercises and empathy, boys can 'experience' what it is like to be discriminated against or excluded, and reflect on their own behavior.
➢ Challenge stereotypes: Do all people of a certain group behave the same?
➢ Expose boys to people from the LGBT community to challenge stereotypes and bias.
➢ Let boys reflect on what is 'typical' socially expected female and male behavior in order to challenge norms and create space for diversity ("Adolescent Boys and Young Men", 2016, pg. 47).

This list covers a few different stages of advocacy. First, there is preparation that must be done by facilitators before they enter a classroom. Second there is groundwork which will create a safe space for these conversations to occur.Third, there are some strategies for engaging young men in conversations about gender and sexual diversity. These three stages illustrate that it is not only specific intervention exercises which are important, but the preparation before the workshop, and the creation of ground rules within the workshops which allow interventions to be successful.

Within the very thorough article by Jewell, Morrison, and Gazzola (2012) some of these same strategies are discussed more at length. The recommended approaches are broken down into seven sections:

1. using education to dispel false beliefs and stereotypes;
2. providing opportunities for either direct or anticipated contact;
3. encouraging others to build empathy by viewing the world from an alternative perspective;
4. addressing the disconnect between egalitarian standards and behaviors, including heteronormative actions that run counter to tolerance and acceptance;
5. using credible facilitators to allow intervention participants a chance to reflect and process new information;
6. providing opportunities for intervention participants to put knowledge into practice; and
7. developing manuals and employing evaluation strategies to assess and improve interventions (Jewell et. al, 2012; Haney, 2016).

This article is specifically about reducing homonegativity towards lesbian and gay people, and emphasizes that different approaches should be applied to working to change attitudes around bisexuality

or transgender people because there is a different body of research which is used for those interventions. Jewell et. al (2016) break down how homonegativity has cognitive, affective, and behavioral components, and that interventions should aim to address each of these manifestations within their work. The first section outlines how a cognitive-educational approach should be used to address "religious and gender role ideologies; stereotypic beliefs about homosexuality, men, and women; perceptions of gay men's and lesbian women's masculinity" (Jewell et. al, 2016, pg. 210). Some examples of workshop activities which fulfill this education model include showing films about prominent LGBTQ+ figures, defining key terms around gender and sexuality, discussing Bible verses which are often interpreted in a homonegative fashion, and providing examples of heteronormative and homonegative norms and behaviors (Jewell et. al, 2016, pg. 211).

Another strategy which is frequently employed is direct contact with individuals who identify as lesbian or gay within a workshop setting. Especially for those who haven't had previous contact with the 'out-group' having a positive interaction can reduce 'in-group' feelings of identity threat and anxiety. Research shows that, "intergroup contact typically reduces the affective component of prejudice more than the cognitive component" (Jewell et. al, 2016, pg. 212). Experiencing positive feelings towards an individual member of the out-group can reduce affective manifestation of prejudice towards the general out-group. Although contact with a member of the out-group can offer a powerful site for change, there is also risks involved. Another possible outcome of intergroup contact is, "subtyping"in which positive feelings towards an individual member of the out-group are reserved for the individual and don't extend to the entire out-group. For the out-group members who are providing this experience, there can be psychological, emotional, or sometimes physical risks and therefore their safety must be taken into full consideration (ibid, 2016, pg. 212).

Increasing empathy towards people from this subordinated group is an important way to change homonegative attitudes and behaviors. Increased empathy can be accomplished through asking

participants to put themselves in the shoes of gay person or lesbian person (this is also called

perspective-taking); through hearing stories about or from lesbian and gay people; and through having a

parallel emotional response to a lesbian or gay person, for example, through a common experience of loss,

rejection, or marginalization. Possible responses to intervention which aim to increase empathy include

realizing that, "there are fewer differences between themselves and out-group members than they had

though" (Jewell et. al, 2012, pg. 214).

For groups who consider themselves unprejudiced but still display homonegativity in subtle

behaviors, it is important to facilitate experiences which help them recognize their own homonegativity.

One such way is to increase awareness of social norms which perpetuate homonegativity, and show the

discrepancies between "egalitarian beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and the social benefits they experience as

a result of being heterosexual" (Jewell et. al, 2012, pg. 215). While all these strategies are influential for

cognitive and affective forms of prejudice, they do not directly interact with behavioral prejudice.

Interventions which target behavioral prejudice could include presentation of possible scenarios and

analysis of where homonegativity is present and how they could be changed. Behavioral interventions are

especially important; evidence demonstrates that often heterosexual groups won't recognize when they

engage in homonegative behaviors (Jewell et. al, 2012, pg. 217).

After these kinds of exercises, participants must be given time to reflect on their experiences in

order to strengthen long term changes of attitudes and behaviors. Research has found that heterosexual

groups are often most comfortable doing reflection sessions with a heterosexual facilitator. With a

heterosexual facilitator, participants feel able to ask questions that they would not ask someone from the

LGBTQ+ community (Jewell et. al, 2012, pg. 215). When developing post-intervention monitoring

techniques, creating review systems which measure cognitive, affective, and behavioral change will

provide the most thorough evidence towards which strategies are most effective in changing behaviors

and attitudes over the long term (Jewell et. al, 2012, pg. 217).

Similar intervention techniques such as perspective taking, and parallel empathy exercises are used in the Imagine Project workshops. In that context the exercises don't aim to change attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people, instead exercises prompt reflection about attitudes and behaviors which perpetuate sexual violence and harassment, and aim to increase empathy towards women and girls. By prompting Imagine workshop participants to also think critically about homonegative attitudes and behaviors, the Imagine Workshops could work through misogyny and homophobia together and get to the root of hegemonic masculinity by touching on it's anti-femininity roots. This close analysis of different intervention techniques, and the framework of affective, cognitive, and behavioral change could be helpful when planning future iterations of the Imagine Project.

<u>Findings & Analysis</u>

The following section looks at the main themes which I found in the qualitative data collected through interviews with five peer educators and the director of Emancipator who have been previously introduced.

There are three sections to my analysis:

1. Defining Homophobia: In this section I explore how the peer educators define homophobia and how it has manifested in the Imagine workshops. I determined that homophobia shows up in the workshops in a number of ways: implicitly, explicitly, and through the compulsory heterosexuality which workshop participants usually enforce.

2. Limitations & Defining Success: In this section I explore what peer educators expected of the workshops before they started, what limitations they have faced in reaching their ambitious goals, and how they have redefined success to match their experiences within the workshops.

3. Strategies for Making Change: In this section I look at what strategies peer educators have identified for combating homophobia, how those strategies compare to the related literature, and what changes could be made in the future.

Defining Homophobia

To contextualize my research question, "How can dutch peer educators combat homophobia within the Imagine Project workshops?" I needed to have a better understanding of how peer educators conceptualize homophobia and how homophobia operates within the workshops. Lars defined homophobia as, "a certain kind of uncomfort with anything that…[doesn't have to do with] the heteronormative norm". He went on to say that, "It starts with being uncomfortable with it and that can grow and manifest layers and of course you can be really explicit…but a lot of it is also under the radar"(Lars, personal communication, April 5, 2018). Defining homophobia in relation to heteronormativity is helpful because it exhibits the connection between social constructions of masculinity and heterosexuality. Jens also talked about the connections between constructing gender and homophobia. When I asked him how homophobia has manifested in the workshops on masculinity which he has run over the last 12 years, he said,

> "Homophobia is always present when we talk about masculinity. Even if it doesn't show up it's there. Actually the first lesson all men in our society learn is that you shouldn't be effeminate…if boys don't conform to the norm of masculinity, they will be called fag, or mietje (Dutch equivalent), and be treated accordingly" (Jens, personal communication, April 11, 2018).

Jens captures the central role rejecting femininity plays in constructing masculinity and how homophobia becomes the tool which enables men and boys to police one another's gender. Subsequently the 'uncomfort' with anything outside of heteronormativity which Lars describes has to do with non-normative sexuality but also with any gender expression which breaks the narrow confines of hegemonic masculinity. One of the goals of the Imagine Project workshops is to challenge unhealthy masculinities and help young men explore gender outside of the confines of gender norms. Although homophobia plays a role in how society constructs masculinity, homophobia is often presented only as a prejudice against gay people and not as a function of hegemonic masculinity.

Broadening the Definition of Homophobia

In my interview with Jens, he said that defining homophobia as only having to do with anti-gay violence, is maintaining a boundary and erasing the fact that homophobia has negative effects not just for the LGBTQ community but for everyone,

> We should broaden our definition of the problem of homophobia, so it should not just be about gay people and protecting them...I mean I understand the need there. At the same time we are saying there is a different category and we are saying we should accept them and tolerate them and whatever and not harm them and then this implies that there is them and us as the other category and those boundaries become even stronger because [it implies that] what it means to be a man is either this or that. So I think it's really important to start seeing that homophobia harms all men in many different ways and at the same time it pushes men towards sexual violence to women (Jens, personal communication, April 11, 2018).

Once the connections between hegemonic masculinity and homophobia are illustrated, Jens's position on homophobia makes a lot of sense. It also makes sense why this connection isn't always made, from afar it is clear that LGBTQ people are particularly vulnerable, and men who do comply to gender and sexuality norms benefit from global patriarchy. So therefore initiatives which are trying to combat homophobia pay a lot of attention to empowering LGBTQ communities and not so much attention to transforming masculinities. Jens is pushing for a more gender transformative approach to homophobia which isn't about, "countering discrimination of LGBT people alone - but it is about liberating all men from the closet of masculinity" he continued by noting that, "the basic strategy [of the Imagine workshops]...works for that, it make them reflect, hey what does it mean to be a man" (Jens, personal communication, April 11, 2018). For most of the peer educators when I asked about homophobia they defined it as being more connected to blatant anti-gay sentiments than to the impossible demands which hegemonic masculinities place on men.

Implicit Homophobia

I am using the term implicit homophobia to describe how homophobia is present in the Imagine workshops not only when participants express anti-gay feelings but also when participants take part in relational performances of masculinity which depend on rejection of femininity and assertions of

heterosexuality. Often when peer educators gave me examples of homophobia they were sharing stories

of blatant anti-gay attitudes instead of instances of implicit homophobia. I would usually follow up by

asking if that was always how homophobia presented itself or if there were other manifestations as well.

In response to that question Jasper said, "Yeah, I think maybe when boys refer to weak men [it's

homophobia]...but I think for a lot it's normal or it's normalized, so [it's] not very direct. Which I think is

a part of dutch society in a way" (Jasper, personal communication, April 6, 2018). When Jasper describes

this homophobia as normalized and not very direct he captures the ubiquitous nature of implicit

homophobia throughout society. Other peer educators also shared examples of implicit homophobia,

Gabe mentioned two different ways he sees it in the workshops. The first example he gave was about a

specific exercise in which workshop participants position one another as statues and are asked to represent

femininity and then masculinity through their 'statues'[1],

> Usually with femininity they cross their legs or start talking in a really high pitch voice and it's
> really stereotypical. And then we talk about the crossover between femininity and masculinity
> and how some men are more feminine and some women are more masculine. Sometimes [there
> are] boys [who] don't even want to cross their legs because they feel ashamed or they think that
> their peers will laugh at them. So just basic movements or gestures are already shied away from
> just because they're apparently too feminine even in an experimental exercise...boys are generally
> really afraid to seem feminine, (Gabe, personal communication, April 17, 2018).

Repudiation of femininity presented itself in this workshop when the participants either exaggerated an

essentialized feminine gender performance or completely refused to act it out at all. Both are example of

the participants distancing themselves from anything which has to do with femininity in order to maintain

their masculine gender performance. While they cannot embody femininity in any way, young men are

expected by society to display a certain type of interest in sex or relationships with women, and they also

expect this from one another. Gabe talked about those group expectations as another site of implicit

homophobia,

> When it comes to how do you approach girls [in the workshops] - if someone says they are not
> interested in girls, or not yet, or not in that way or not focused on that in their lives, some other

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[1] Specific information about this exercise is provided in the Lit Review section, pg.

boys might laugh at them and say well are you gay or something, what's the matter with you why aren't you into girls (Gabe, personal communication, April 17, 2018).

Young men perform their masculinity for each other through their focus in pursuing romantic or sexual relationships with girls. Through this logic of hegemonic masculinity if you are not invested in pursuing girls you are not a real man, so therefore being gay is equal to not being a 'real man'. It is within this problematic equation that sexual violence is connected to homophobia.

Sexual Violence and Homophobia

Hegemonic masculinity not only places men in a very narrow box of what is means to be a man, it also produces an identity for women as sex objects (Buijs et. al, 2011). This objectification produces unhealthy and dangerous dynamic where men enter sexual situations from a place anxiety and aggression, instead of communication and respect. Gabe spoke about this dynamic, commenting that when there is so much pressure to prove your masculinity by proving your heterosexuality, one's priorities are not clear mutual consent with sex partners but instead attaining a goal,

> Homophobia is really connected to the pressure of being a real man and adhering to hyper masculinity. So in fear of being seen as not a real man or boy by other men I think it's easier in that context to cross the boundaries of women because your priority...is not the wellbeing of the other person or the girl or the woman - but your priority is not being seen as gay. So you go out of your way to prove that you're not gay without really putting yourself in the other person's shoes - in the girls or women's shoes (Gabe, personal communication, April 17, 2018).

Henry also reflected on this process and said that the masculine ideal, "alpha male status", is accomplished through the mistreatment of others,

> At the moment a boy doesn't meet our alpha male standards - and he's being called out and he doesn't actually have something to prove, what happens is you make a choice - will I accept this and be myself or will I marginalize another group so I can be more above that. When we're trying to achieve that alpha male status a part of it is oppressing a lot of other groups and denying the fact that their existence is true (Henry, personal communication, April 9, 2018).

Therefore to end SV&SH men must change their relationships with women and reconstruct their relationships with other men. If did not have to prove their masculinity to one another there is much more space for communication and vulnerability.

Explicit Homophobia

Throughout my interviews peer educators gave some examples of blatant homophobia. Peer

educators said that it was shocking when people shared anti-gay opinions so openly and sometimes they

were unsure how to address the statements. In my interview with Jasper he told me about an instance of

blatant homophobia which occurred during the last workshop he facilitated. Within this workshop the

peer educators showed a video about a young gay man going on a date. In the video the two boys kiss

during their date and in response some workshop participants said they didn't want to watch the video.

With some help from the teacher they finished the video and asked the participants to reflect on what they

had watched,

> We just really openly asked what they thought about it and one guy said, 'Well that's not natural,
> god hasn't meant people to be this way'. I found it quite challenging to hear it so direct, like I
> know people have those opinions but to hear it like that, and it was it was like how can we deal
> with this? We can't really change their opinion in an hour, and how do we, I think we did respect
> their opinion, we did not try to force [it], or we didn't make them think they were having wrong
> thoughts but it was kind of like how do we go on from here? (Jasper, April 6, 2018).

Jasper told me this was the first time he had encountered homophobia in a workshop, and by that he

meant clear expression of anti-gay feelings instead of general enforcement of gender norms or other

features of hegemonic masculinity. In this specific instance the workshop participant was expressing

anti-gay sentiments with a religious background. Marcus also told me a time when he was surprised when

participants displayed evident anti-gay feelings that were connected to religion. This happened during an

exercise where facilitators would present scenarios to the participants in order to promote conversation,

> I was in a workshop at an MBO (vocational) school and Henry asked them - "what would you
> rather have, that you came home and your parents told you that your brother died, or that you
> would come home one day and your parents told you your brother came out of the closet as gay"
> and people were really struggling with this statement saying, 'oh well, if he's gay he's going to
> hell for this and I will be the brother of a gay man, and would I like that...' So, people were really
> struggling and I was totally shocked that this happened. But Henry had managed to read the room
> because these were very religious people (Marcus, personal communication, April 18, 2018).

The aim of this exercise was to engage the participants in open dialogue and promote a space where

participants could not only talk about what they believe, but *why* they believe what they believe. The hope

is that through presenting a platform for the participants to speak their mind, those with homophobic

views will be countered by others in the classroom who think differently. But sometimes participants who

express homophobic views create a status quo that everyone else in the group must adhere to. This is what

happened in a workshop which Lars and Gabe ran. The event happened during an exercise called Opinion

Continuum, during this exercise the facilitator reads out a statement and participants can go to the left or

to the right of a central 'line' to show if they agree or disagree. Then the peer educators will ask

participants to explain why they agree or disagree,

> We have this line game, we have a quote and then they can stand to the right or to the left which
> means they agree or disagree. The quote was 'gay [men] are not real men' and then everybody
> stood on the side that they agreed with the [quote]. I asked them to tell me about it, why do you
> think so? [When] they [shared] there were so many different ideas and beliefs that were so deeply
> rooted. [The participants said that gay men] all wear makeup and use botox, and they want a lot
> of attention and they were super annoying...One guy was really talking about it, and guys [behind
> him] were really clapping his shoulder encouraging him, like 'yeah bro, this is how we roll'. And
> I was like, ok, I'm just going to invite them to speak more from their mind (Lars, personal
> communication, April 5, 2018).

After the participants had expressed their views Lars, who is gay, decided to come out and tell his story in

order to provide a counterexample to the narrative which these workshop participants had presented. I

will talk about coming out as a strategy for making change later in my analysis. This example exhibits

how misogyny and homophobia are connected. All of the negative stereotypes about gay men which were

shared during that exercise were stereotypically feminine things being hypothetically performed by men.

In order to represent that gay men were not real men the participants explained that they were like

women, reinforcing the importance of repudiation of femininity in order to correctly perform masculinity.

Another thing which was notable about this event was how the young man who was "really talking about

it" got credit from his peers. By expressing these hateful views that individual participant's own

masculinity was confirmed. Gabe commented on the group dynamic when he told me about this

experience,

> We had a statement in the workshop- 'gay men are not real men'. And we were quite shocked bc everyone in that classroom agreed. But immediately I thought maybe half of these people don't agree but they have to go with the crowd and it's difficult to disentangle right at that moment what the reasons are for their opinions and how you can deconstruct that. There's always a gap between theory, philosophy, and practice and that's becoming clear in the workshops (Gabe, personal communication, April 17, 2018).

The surprise and shock which these peer educators experienced when they encountered explicit anti-gay

statements in the workshops speaks to the taboo surrounding homophobia in Dutch cultural norms.

Homophobia is present in Dutch society but in much more subtle ways than what was recounted by the

peer educators. It's significant to recognize that both subtle and explicit homophobia stem from the same

places including maintenance of one's own identity, rigid gender norms, and hierarchies created by

hegemonic masculinity (Jewell et. al, 2012). Interventions which increase empathy through perspective

taking and direct contact are important for explicit and implicit forms of homophobia. Therefore when

blatant anti-gay views are expressed in workshops peer educators could experiment with responding in

the same way they would to unhealthy masculinity in general. If they reframe blatant homophobia in this

way, moments where explicit homophobia is shared might feel less stressful. Later on in the analysis I

will reflect on strategies used to address blatant homophobia.

Heteronormativity and Compulsory Heterosexuality

Something that all the peer educators mentioned was wanting the workshops to be less

heteronormative. They envision this change in two ways, first off that the workshop curriculum isn't only

speaking about the experiences of straight, cisgender people, and secondly that the workshop participants

who are not straight or cisgender feel comfortable talking about their experiences within the workshop

setting. The first goal is actually in the purview of the peer educators because they can change exercises

and discussion prompts to include more gender and sexual diversity. Jasper pointed out that especially for

the peer educators who aren't straight or cisgender, seeing their own stories reflected in the curriculum is

a change they wish to make in the future,

> In the past months we've been talking about [how] the workshops are very heteronormative. And
> we are quite a diverse group, there are a few gay people, gay guys, and i'm trans myself, so for
> most of us we were like, we don't want to focus only on that. We want to pay attention to other
> identities, but we weren't sure how to do that really (Jasper, personal communication, April 6,
> 2018).

In my interview with Gabe he said that the Imagine Project itself starts from a heteronormative place,

> [Heteronormativity] is one of the biggest challenges I think… [and] it already starts out with our
> mission, combating violence against women and girls. That's for obvious reason –most survivors
> are women and girls, most perpetrators are men– and that's the whole reason we're doing this. So
> that's already kind of heteronormative (Gabe, personal communication, April 17, 2018).

Jasper also reflected on the heteronormativity of the project by saying, "as in a lot of places in society,

heteronormative is just the first start. And [the peer educators] have found out that we don't like it that

way" (Jasper, personal communication, April 6, 2018). Changing the workshop curriculum to include

gender and sexual diversity is an important goal, and it will help to destabilize gender norms and start

conversations around gendered expectations.

The second goal of making workshops a safe space for LGBTQ+ participants is somewhat out of

the peer educators control. While they can try to make the workshops themselves a safer space for gender

and sexual diversity, the contexts which they're entering are often heteronormative and they cannot

change that within the space of one workshop. Henry shared that although the peer educators are aware

that there is a gap in the workshops, external factors make inclusion of gender and sexual diversity

difficult,

> Challenges that we have is actually that we're having a quite heteronormative program. It's a
> challenge because I know that the moment I step into the room that not everyone is
> heteronormative - or does comply to that. I want to offer them a piece of space so they can talk
> about the things that they want to talk about but their classmates react serious to that, (Henry,
> personal communication, April 9, 2018).

Possible repercussions beyond the workshop were also mentioned by Gabe and Lars. Gabe told me that

for workshop participants who are questioning their sexuality, "there can be a backlash", he went on to

say, " [So] how do we deal with peer pressure in the groups, how do we deal with bullying, and how do

we create a safe enough environment" (Gabe, personal communication, April 17, 2018). Consequently

peer educators can create a more LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum, but it might be create a barrier with the

workshop participants. Lars told me that he has noticed how even bringing up sexual diversity can cause

anxiety within a group,

> It has something to do with group dynamics, when this topic comes up it's like ok - who is going
> to react and how are the others going to react [to] the person who is [speaking out]…People who
> say they don't really care [if someone is gay], you can see [in the group] that somebody is
> breaking the [norm]....Sometimes when you're talking about girls and women they want to talk a
> lot about it, but on the topic of [gender and sexual diversity] they are really closed. They are
> afraid about what to say and what other people [will] think about it if I say this" (Lars, personal
> communication, April 5, 2018).

So for some workshop participants even speaking generally or hypothetically about non-normative

sexualities (let alone speaking about personal experiences with non-normative sexuality) puts them too

close to non-normative gender and sexulity roles which undermine their masculinity. It is also meaningful

that in comparison to those topics, workshop participants would have lots to say about women and girls.

By emphasizing their interest on heterosexual relationships workshop participants can reaffirm their

masculinity in front of their peers. This is an example of compulsory heterosexuality, in which women

and girls become implicated in how masculinity is constructed and upheld (Pascoe, 2011).

Heteronormativity as a manifestation of homophobia is very pervasive throughout society and often isn't

noticed or understood within heterosexual groups (Jewell et. al, 2012). Using intervention techniques to

help people understand how they perpetuate heteronormativity can be a powerful tool to destabilize

gender norms.

Can the workshops unsettle hegemonic masculinities which hurt men and women (and people of

other genders) while having heteronormativity stay intact? Gender won't be truly transformed until

heteronormativity is destroyed, but we are far from that reality. As an entry point in the workshops,

tapping into a group's compulsory heterosexuality and corollary need to talk about women and girls can

be very valuable. In other words, starting with heteronormativity might be the way to eventually move

beyond it. Throughout my interviews, peer educators also told me about moments of success that they had

witnessed during workshops and often a successful moment was also one which stemmed from

heteronormativity. Gabe told me about the third and final session of a workshop, where the participants

reflected on positive ways to flirt or express romantic interest,

> We had three weeks and in the second or final hour - there was this conversation among the students themselves about how to approach someone if you're interested. [They said] 'If this and this and this are all wrong, if those things are harassment, [how] can we do it in an acceptable manner?' They were actually giving each other advice facilitated by us...On the topic [of] hitting on girls we could connect more. It's also more successful if we manage to talk to them about something that interests them (Gabe, personal communication, April 17, 2018).

Henry me told me about a workshop with a group of religious boys who all were sure they would get

married after school. They had a conversation about responsibilities within a relationship,

> I asked, 'What can you expect from your partner in your relationship?' they said, 'My wife needs to cook, she needs to do this, she needs to do that.' Ok, but what do you need to do?, "I just need to bring in the bacon." Ok it's cool. I asked them, "When it comes to sex, what do you need to do?" [They said], "Yeah…yeah ok…I don't know, what do I need to do?"...We went on for two hours talking about what you need to do to keep your partner happy and we talked about consent and that kind of stuff. Afterwards, after that session one of those boys came to me and he was like 17 or 18 and he said, "Sir, you're the first one in my life who has talked about my responsibilities when it comes to relationships and portraying myself as a man. Everyone expects me to know everything and to do everything, and when I ask them, when I ask questions, people don't take my questions seriously because you need to know everything. But when I fuck up everyone blames me, and you're the first person to talk about it and really give advice, and I'm very grateful for that." (Henry, personal communication, April 9, 2018).

In a workshop which Jasper and Gabe facilitated a participant decided to share a personal story with the

group, which prompted a conversation about catcalling and harassment,

> Yeah, there was this guy in one workshop that was really cool. He said [that] he was at a gym and there was a girl he really liked and so he whistled at her. She didn't respond and so he was bummed out. After some time he saw the girl again and…. they started talking. He told her "I like you" and she was like "Yeah, I like you too, but I don't want to be whistled at like an animal." And he told us that he had no idea that it would be seen as something negative by the girl. In a way, that's a very small thing of sexual violence, but it's also kind of a harassment thing. I think

that was great that he shared that, that he said it was something he had done, for the other guys to hear and think, 'oh maybe that's not the way to go' (Jasper, personal communication, April 6, 2018).

Each of these stories shows examples of the kind of foundational work that needs to be done in order to start having complex conversations around sexual diversity. When the peer educators have established a connection with the participants and there is mutual trust, then participants can potentially be challenged to transgress social norms and openly discuss gender and sexuality outside of the realms of heteronormativity and compulsory heterosexuality. In the next section I will explore what challenges stand in the way of this process, and how peer educators work within the current limitations of the Imagine Project.

Limitations & Defining Success

To grasp how peer educators define the goals of the Imagine Project workshops, I asked questions about the strengths and weaknesses of the initiative and what constitutes a successful workshop. For most peer educators there was a process of matching their ambitions to the scale of the project, and multiple people talked about redefining success as "planting a seed." Planting a seed represents beginning, strengthening, or continuing a conversation with the workshop participants about gender roles, stereotypes, and gendered expectations. The peer educators also reflected on the importance of dialogue for a successful workshop and the challenges of creating a safe space where open conversation can occur. An aspect of these workshops that I wanted to pay special attention to in this section was the role of race and class. Due to racism and classism, the Imagine Project usually works within young men of color and in the 'lower level' schools. Upper level schools have rejected the Imagine Projects requests to visit because they believe that their students don't need to take part in an intervention about sexual violence and sexual harassment. These biases inhibit the Imagine Project from reaching its full potential and perpetuate a harmful stereotype that only subordinated men are perpetrators of violence. Looking towards the future there are many different directions the workshops could go, and the peer educators and Jens shared ideas about possible changes which would strengthen the project.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Project

There are financial and temporal realities which limit the Imagine Project. The peer educators have only been facilitating workshops for a year, and they do this work as volunteers. The Dutch chapter of the project is coordinated by a small team which is comprised of Jens, Henry, and interns. Consequently there are many ambitions which cannot be met because of finite time and money. The workshops are very short; peer educators are only in any given workshop setting three times maximum and most often they are only there twice. Each time peer educators facilitate a new workshop they are

entering a completely unfamiliar setting, and there are many factors which are out of their control.

Sometimes teachers are helpful during workshops and sometimes they are detrimental to workshops. I

heard stories where teachers helped peer educators navigate tricky situations or challenged their students

to think about gender and sexual diversity. I also heard stories about teachers making homophobic

comments, or generally being uninvested because the Imagine workshop is, "just another program they

have to do" (Henry, personal communication, April 9, 2018). In my interview with Jasper, he commented

on how these constraints also have a positive side,

> Yeah I think a weakness is that it's only three times maximum, but at the same time it's a strength
> because for many of the [workshop participants] it's the first time they deal with these things and
> maybe it can be overwhelming if you keep on going about these themes if they haven't thought
> about it before (Jasper, personal communication, April 6, 2018).

The fact that many workshop participants were newcomers to these subjects was something that hadn't

been factored into the original goals of the Imagine Project. Within the Imagine Project's original timeline

peer educators were supposed to begin facilitating workshops, identify youth leaders, and recruit them to

be peer educators in their own communities all in one year ("IMAGINE Project A" 2015). In reality even

getting into schools has been a challenge, and once peer educators are in schools, they've found that their

original goals don't always make sense for the context they're entering. In my interview with Henry, who

is the Imagine Project program director at Emancipator and a peer educator, he reflected on this process,

> "I think that [the workshop is a] success [when] we walk into the classroom, and we can have
> boys who have never discussed these topics, have an hour long interactive discussion with each
> other, but also with the peer educators, or with the teacher. That is how I'm [measuring success]
> because when we started [we had big goals]. Our [goal was that] at the end of the program these
> young men should be able to intervene in their communities, which was very ambitious. Then you
> sit there with a group of 5 or 6 boys who have never talked about this… so we had to put our
> ambitions on hold and make it more realistic. So [first off] if you're having those interesting
> discussions and people are participating - that's a success" (Henry, personal communication,
> April 9, 2018).

In this quote Henry reflects on how he reframed his original ambitions once the limitations of the project

became clear through practice. Henry mentioned that discussions and participation are key elements in

how he defines success, and instead of having specific goals for the outcome of those discussions, he wants to see them happening as a first step. I also heard from other peer educators about how they define success.

Planting seeds: Redefining Expectations

At this stage in the project peer educators are learning about the complexities of facilitating workshops and identifying the best practices for working with adolescent boys. Peer educators describe changing expectations and ambitions from large goals to more plausible incremental goals. I heard from Gabe that his initial goal to transform workshop participants views wasn't productive once he began running workshops,

> At one of the first workshops I thought well, "I want to make everyone [here] a feminist - that's the ultimate goal." But yeah, I soon realized and found out that that's impossible. I mean if I think back to when I was 16 I also had no idea [about these topics] (Gabe, personal communication, April 17, 2018).

Lars also described a desire to see workshop participants change, and told me how he has redefined success for himself,

> Of course I would love it if they change, [if] some people change their perspectives on it. What keeps me running is to be able to have this dialogue and to show our perspectives and to let them think about it. That's the only thing I can do, and if they take something from it I'm super grateful but in the end you never know (Lars, personal communication, April 5, 2018).

By focusing on sharing his own story and perspective, Lars centers aspects of the Imagine Project which he does have control over. This perspective helps him sustain his involvement in work which often does not yield tangible results and is sometimes frustrating. For Jasper a workshop is successful if after the workshop "...the participants write down that they learned something, or [that we talked about] something they hadn't thought about before" (Jasper, personal communication, April 6, 2018). Gabe also said that if after the workshop there was any positive response that equaled success for him,

> I learned to see it as a success if one or two of the boys come up to us after the workshop and thank us or ask more questions, or when the teachers ask us to come back next year - it's all about planting seeds (Gabe, personal communication, April 17, 2018).

For Jens, who has been doing this work for over a decade, just the existence of the Imagine Project is a

success.

> "Often you could also say just the fact that we're giving the workshop is [already] a major
> success, just the fact that these boys are confronted with this topic. When I started these
> workshops [that just] wasn't the case, there was no public discussion of [SV&SH] ever."

For Lars, the idea of planting a seed can also help when workshops aren't successful. His comment is

connected to Jens'quote because he is also positing that just by running these workshops, young men

begin to think about gender norms and expectations, which can lay the groundwork for future positive

change,

> I believe you can be planting a seed even though when I see [nobody] is really engaged, or they
> are [really] negative on the topics, maybe years later something will start to grow, or they will
> read something, and they will feel like ahh now I understand something (Lars, personal
> communication, April 5, 2018).

In this quote, Lars identified low participation as one of the greatest challenges for the workshops.

Although peer educators have changed their expectations and redefined ambitions, they hope that

workshop participants will be responsive and engaged.

The Importance of Dialogue

Within the time restraints present in the Imagine Workshops peer educators hope that

participants will take part in conversations, because when "people don't open up you're talking to a wall"

(Lars, personal communication, April 5, 2018). Gabe also shared this feeling in his interview,

> My least favorite is workshops where people don't talk or don't participate, [and] we can't really
> force them to do so. You're never sure if people are silent because they have their own bad
> experiences, or because they're just shy, or find it difficult to open up...or if they're silent because
> they are not interested or are defensive about these issues, so it's up to us to navigate that and
> that's difficult (Gabe, personal communication, April 17, 2018).

In my interview with Marcus he reflected on the reasons why people don't open up and challenges which

he has observed in the workshops,

> In the workshops a challenge is finding the right balance between going on topic, and switching
> between active stuff and in depth stuff. When we're short on time we might get really serious
> really soon, which is a shock to these people which might result in them turtling. Which is the

opposite of we want, we want people to open up and express their feelings, and create this open and safe space (Marcus, April 18, 2018).

Because workshop participants sometimes don't have as much experience talking about these topics, creating a space where they can be vulnerable and ask questions becomes all the more important. All the peer educators mentioned that one of their goals was creating a safe space. In my interview with Henry he defined a safe space as,

> [A space where] every participant can talk and say what they want to say during that workshop without having to fear that I would correct them or that their classmate would laugh at them or call them out and it can be said and dealt with during that workshop and it wouldn't be afterwards that their classmates would [make fun of them]… (Henry, personal communication, April 9, 2018).

Creating a safe space is a challenge in any workshop setting, and within the short time of the Imagine workshop, it is a difficult task. Also working with teenage boys creates some unique barriers to creating a safe space. As Gabe said in his interview, "it's difficult to break through the mask that everyone is wearing because they're not only boys, but they're also teenagers", (Gabe, personal communication, April 17, 2018). As previously explored groups enforce heterosexuality which can automatically make the space unsafe for workshop participants who are not straight or cisgender. Compulsory heterosexuality also makes it more difficult for boys to be vulnerable in front of their peers. Lars reflected that this changes over time, but limitations of the workshop stand in the way,

> I think it's really hard to create this safe space…to really [have] boys open up and to really talk about [these topics]. A lot of times it's just a lot of masks or a lot of smooth talk…On the end of the workshop is sometimes when you see people really opening up but then it's already the end of the workshop (Lars, personal communication , April 5, 2018).

Until larger structural limitations change, trying to build trust within a limited time will be challenge which peer educators must work with. Over time peer educators will also gain more skills for working within these limitations and as the project grows will learn what strategies work in different contexts. Within this first iteration of the Imagine Project peer educators have visited many vocational or 'lower level' schools and have not spent as much time in university track schools. Often the lower level or

vocational schools are attended by majority students of color, and many of the peer educators are white.

This is a limitation to the Imagine Project which is important to explore and think critically about.

<p align="center">*Dutch Racism and Participant Demographics*</p>

When I talked to the peer educators about the limitations of the Imagine Project they talked about

lack of diversity among the Imagine project team. All of the peer educators that I spoke with are white

except for Henry, and all of them have been through higher education. They talked about needing to have

both more racial diversity and also varied socioeconomic and educational backgrounds among the peer

educators. Most of the groups that the peer educators work with are young men of color, and the Imagine

workshops are often presented at vocational schools or lower levels of the education system[2]. Part of

Henry's role as the Imagine Project coordinator at Emancipator is to reach out to schools and recruit them

to host the Imagine Project workshops. During his interview he explained why only certain schools have

signed up to host the workshop,

> A lot of teachers, social professional, and also politicians think this is the group that we need to be working with - funding working with migrant kids more than funding working with white upper middle class kids. On one side - teachers who are working with these kids see the social problems and on the other hand when we're talking about higher educational white students, for some reason our society doesn't think that they're a problem or that they're wrestling with these kinds of topics. Also teachers are fully denying that there are sexual problems or gender injustice in their classrooms because 'these aren't the types of boys that commit these kinds of crimes'. That's what makes it so hard, and that's why we only see students of color, or students with lower education and that kind of stuff because society only acknowledges or sees them as the problem (Henry, personal communication, April 9, 2018).

During my interview with Gabe he talked about how this narrative is displayed within 'progressive'

Dutch communities,

> There's some sort of arrogance with liberal, highly educated, center of political spectrum, really rational - those spaces also at uni for instance. Those people think this kind of work is something that needs to happen in other places, such as schools in bad neighborhoods, and especially with muslim kids and stuff like that because 'they need to learn that here in the Netherlands we have

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[2] I am still very confused by the secondary education system in the Netherlands. Peer educators often described the schools they visited as 'lower levels of education' versus 'university track' schools and so I will describe schools as lower level or university track.

> gender equality'. So there needs to be more self reflexivity in those groups… (Gabe, personal communication, April 17, 2018).

This discourse displays women's rights in the same position of Dutch 'cultural citizenship' which Buijs et. al explain in relation to LGBTQ+ rights. In this case the dichotomy is created between the tolerant, progressive Dutch who stand for women's rights, and the 'backwards' other who are a threat to women. The narrative that upper middle class ethnically Dutch students don't need to participate in interventions like the Imagine Project is also upheld by the students themselves. The times when peer educators did visit university track schools, workshop participants weren't open to being vulnerable because of the stigma surrounding open homophobia and misogyny in Dutch culture. Henry explained how these groups avoid confronting their own prejudices,

> With higher education groups they say "yeah everyone should be themselves because we're here in the Netherlands we're not in any crazy Islamic country" but while reviewing their answers they are also homophobic or [misogynistic]. Sometimes kids will make very homophobic remarks but [then] when you ask them about it, they'll say "oh no i'm not homophobic, that's not what I said." I want to say "come out and say it" because then we can talk about it, then we can work on it, then you can reflect on it…it's there but you can't discuss it" (Henry, personal communication, April 9, 2018).

During his interview, Jens expressed hope that the #metoo movement is changing this racist narrative,

> Before #metoo [sexual violence] was singled out as a race, color, ethnicity, and refugee issue - which of course was also very problematic for us….The numbers point out for years [that] it's a men's issue, and that is the most relevant statistic. Beyond that there are cultural, class, other issues that play out in the way this problem gets manifested, but we really need to start acknowledging that it's a men and a masculinity issue (Jens, personal communication, April 11, 2018).

While #metoo has made a powerful impact in public awaJasperss around sexual violence, a lot of work still needs to be done in the Netherlands before sexual violence is addressed in all communities, and isn't relegated as 'just a problem in migrant communities'. By ascribing sexual violence to only a part of the population, large groups of young men are not given the resources to questions gender norms and expectations, and are not held accountable when they do commit SV&SH. When I interviewed Marcus we talked about his wish to do the Imagine workshops with students who are studying math or physics,

> I don't have personal LGBTQ experience, so I would like to do it my way, another way. I would like to go to the Gymnasiums to the people who are really interested in mathematics or physics and try to talk to them. But I didn't even get to try to talk to them because every time I would send a email or walk into the school and tell them about my project, they would shrug it off saying, "that's not our issue, we don't have anything with that" (Marcus, personal communication, April 18, 2018).

When I asked him if he thinks conversations about gender are happening in the university track schools, he said they are, "severely lacking" (Marcus, personal communication, April 18, 2018). Going forward it will be essential to work with upper middle class white students and explore how misogyny and homophobia are hidden by Dutch discourses of tolerance. It is also necessary to acknowledge how racilization impacts young men's experiences of masculinity, and to interrogate the power dynamics between white peer educators and students of color. In order to build a diverse team in the future, peer educators should be recruited from outside the world of gender studies and gender equality activism, because of the homogenous nature of those groups.

Long Term Ambition for Structural Change

The Imagine Project is only a three year initiative and it is planned to end in June. All the peer educators I spoke with want to continue doing this work in the future, and each person had ideas for what changes should be made in the next iteration of the project. In my interview with Jens I asked him how he envisions a long term version of the Imagine Project. He emphasized the importance of targeting structural limitations and transforming the education system in order to truly transform gender norms,

> What would be necessary in my opinion is to integrate gender as a main topic in...the whole learning curriculum from a very young age on. Because look at whatever school, there you have at least ten guest lecturers - interventions - or parts of normal lectures, that deal with gender, sexuality, relations, and related behavior. Whether it is on trafficking, alcohol or drug abuse, eating disorders, crossing sexual boundaries, or sex education, there is a lot going on and it's all very fragmented. Often it's left [as] the responsibility of the guest interventionist, or maybe the biology teacher. So if we would manage to put [gender] at the core of every curriculum it should also be at core of the training of teachers, and also at the core of working with parents. I mean I know this is way too visionary to get realized within a project like Imagine and at the same time I feel this is really necessarily where it should be going. I mean, we have a lot of partner organizations doing similar kind of workshops about just those other topics and we all run into the same things. And basically 80% of workshops is about the same stuff, because it is all about

gender and what does it mean and how are we structured by that, how are we limited by that (Jens, personal communication, April 11, 2018).

This ambitious vision takes into account the importance of working with larger communities in order to sustain gender transformative work after a specific intervention has ended. Jens touches on the importance of engaging parents and teachers, two groups which influence how adolescents construct identity. Parents shape how young people understand gender roles and norms during childhood and this has an impact during adolescence. But the group that is hugely influential for adolescent boys and young men is their peers, both male and female (Kato-Wallace et. al, 2016). Research shows that individuals who do participate in gender transformative workshops, are likely to return to previously valued notions of masculinity if their communities shame them for straying from gender norms (Dworkin et. al, 2015). Hence incorporating larger community structures is essential to truly change gender inequalities.

While the Imagine Project is far from realizing a community based approach, they are laying the foundation for more complex interventions in the future. Although Jens has this broader vision he said that he considers the Imagine Project a success because, "We got the chance to develop something that we didn't have yet, that was a great opportunity, now we have a toolkit, we have a group of peer educators, we have visibility with this, we have a demand, a growing demand…" (Jens, personal communication, April 11, 2018). The project is also successful because, "There are young men speaking out about these issues, so they are making clear that not all men want to remain a silent part of the problem, but that men can be and want to be a part of the solution in whatever way" (Jens, personal communication, April 11, 2018). The Imagine Project is starting important conversations and is training men to engage others in critical reflection around gender. In the next section I will explore strategies used to combat homophobia currently, and make some suggestions for future directions to take.

Strategies for Making Change

Many of the strategies used by the peer educators to combat homophobia are found in the literature on prevention and transformation of homonegative views. What is very enlightening about these sections of the interviews was how challenges and contradictions come to light when you put theory into practice. In my interviews I asked peer educators if they had any specific ideas about how my research would be helpful for their future work. In response to this question Marcus said,

> I don't think you should look at it very surgically, like what is the effectiveness and how do we increase effectiveness. I think that is something that for the most part just goes along the way, you learn as you stumble and as you grow (Marcus, personal communication, April 18, 2018).

This was an important reminder that this work is messy and the role of the peer educators isn't to find blanket solutions, because the workshops are never predictable. Instead the peer educators aim to be present within each workshop's context and focus on beginning or supporting critical conversations. In this section I will outline different strategies the peer educators highlighted as ways to combat homophobia within the Imagine workshops, as well as different strategies which could be applied to the Imagine project context.

Using Language to Interrupt Heteronormativity

When I asked the peer educators how they think homophobia should be combatted within the workshops they expressed that small things such as keeping your language gender neutral is important but that centering homophobia might not be possible within the current limitations. In my interview with Jens he spoke about the importance of language as a way to interrupt heteronormativity,

> When I was a teacher - it starts already from [students] asking, What are you? Do you have a girlfriend? I decided not to disclose anything and usually if you don't disclose then you're gay. You say my partner not my wife and if [teachers] talk about partners - [students] know what that mean. So all teachers should not conform to the heteronormative norm (Jens, personal communication, April 11, 2018).

Gabe also said that he uses language to interrupt heteronormativity, but beyond language gender and

sexual diversity hasn't been a central part of the workshops,

> I try to do it with language, whenever we're talking about hitting on girls I always mention, it could be a boy… but i'm not really sure what more we could do at that moment. And we do discuss LGBT issues but more from an abstract [perspective]… more from a distance, and i'm not sure if that works. (Gabe, personal communication, April 17, 2018).

Jasper commented that the language is a doable shift, but more than that would be hard because the

explicit goal of the workshops –engaging boys to end sexual violence– is already a huge undertaking,

> I think maybe in small ways you could already [combat homophobia] in how we do it now, like maybe say, at one workshop they were asking our experiences with relationships, and the peer educator I was working with at the time, he dates girls and boys, and after he said oh well I should have said "yeah a boy I like". Just to say in a subtle way, there's more than just liking the other sex, and I think that doesn't take a lot of effort… But maybe further broadening [to include homophobia], maybe it would be a lot. Already talking about sexual violence is a big thing, yeah maybe it could be included, but it's just such short time, we have such short time. If you want to go in depth on certain topics it's just difficult [to decide] what we want to focus on (Jasper, personal communication, April 6, 2018).

Within the current workshop structure most of the exercises inspire conversations about masculinity,

about relationships with girls, and about boundaries and consent. These are all very important topics and

the workshop time is tight, but when homophobia does come up it's clear it also needs to be addressed

with young men. Lars said it very succinctly in his interview,

> Mostly homophobia comes up when we do this line game, but it's just a part of the workshop, and we see the conflict is so big, that it actually should have a bigger part of it. So mostly we do the line game and it comes up - and so you work with it, but actually it should be completely another workshop (Lars, personal communication, April 5, 2018).

In the future it would be ideal to have more time to unpack homophobia with groups of young men, and

talk about the gender norms and expectations which are communicated through homophobia. Until then

the peer educators can work with one or two exercises in a workshop which inspire conversations about

gender and sexuality diversity. Currently the exercise which prompts these discussions is the line game,

but it would be interesting to experiment with different exercises which touch on gender and sexual

diversity and see what the different results and group responses are.

Keeping Open Dialogue & Refraining from Judgment

As was previously explored creating a space for open dialogue in the workshops is a priority for peer educators. By getting workshop participants to open up and reflect on what it means to be a man, peer educators can facilitate a space where young men work with each other to develop positive masculinities. But in order to have those conversations participants must first start to articulate what their ideas around masculinity are, and the process is the same with homophobia. Once participants voice homophobic views then facilitators can begin to ask questions and start to get to the root of stereotypes and assumptions. Multiple peer educators told me that when participants do express these views, it is important not tell them they are wrong and that the ideas being shared are harmful, but to encourage these conversations. Jasper explained that continuing these conversations, "breaks the norm, because normally they probably wouldn't talk about why they think what they think, they [would] just say it" (Jasper, personal communication, April 6, 2018). This strategy is only really applicable when workshop participants are open about homophobic feelings, and so it isn't as suitable for implicit or emergent homophobias. Jens explained to me the importance of this strategy for encouraging learning instead of closing communication,

> I think what we generally do [in the workshops] is question the meaning of masculinity and I think this is what we should do with homophobia, you would question what their ideas are. [But] a straightforward confrontation never works, you can say, hey this is going too far and we don't do this, but that's not a learning experience that's just a boundary experience (Jens, personal communication, April 11, 2018).

Lars also shared that judging participants is counterproductive,

> Personally, I really try to be open minded and not judgmental towards them…and support them to speak from their hearts [so] we [can] have a dialogue about it. If they say something I disagree [with], [I don't want] to immediately judge them because I know that will shut them off. I would rather keep the conversation running and show the different perspectives and [to] at least keep the communication open…" (Lars, personal communication, April 5, 2018).

This can be difficult to do and uncomfortable for peer educators who are not used to hearing outright expressions of homophobia. As was mentioned in the section on explicit homophobia, peer educators felt

very shocked after those views were expressed. Marcus, who is a science teacher, told me about a time

when one of his students said something homophobic in his physics class, and in response he told the

student that behavior was unacceptable and reported the incident to the school's administration. He told

me that in the workshops, "you address [blatant homophobia] a lot more calmly" (Marcus, personal

communication, April 18, 2018). Gabe also talked about how within another part of his life he would

handle those kinds of remarks quite differently ,

> This is something that comes up with preparing for the workshops and the talks we have with the peer educators - how do you balance between your own opinions and just punishing participants verbally, for their thoughts and their opinions. In my activist way of thinking racism is not an opinion, homophobia is not an opinion, it's never ok and I don't even want to debate that with you. But I know from my own experience how structural and pervasive homophobia actually is and you can't blame individual kids. (Gabe, personal communication, April 17, 2018).

While keeping an open conversation is very important, peer educators have to set up some preliminary

boundaries within a group to make sure participants aren't directing aggression either towards other

classmates or taking over the conversation. Henry told me how he sets clear guidelines with a group for

how people will share their opinions,

> I always let them talk about that - I tell them that no opinion is wrong, it's your opinion and only if you [voice it] can we discuss it. It's cool to voice your opinion but don't use it as a tool to bring other people down. That's how I construct the discussions and often it works but sometimes people will try to do crazy stuff. Then I say you aren't using the rules that we've applied to this discussion and if you want to say your opinion, think about it and in a few minutes you can rephrase your sentence in a way that we can talk about it. I do that so we can discuss [the opinions] because I can say it's wrong, but if they hear it from their friends or classmates it has more impact then what I have to say (J, personal communication, April 9, 2018).

As expressed at the end of this quote the hope is that these open conversations will inspire personal

reflection or that different views expressed by participants or peer educators will help to change

individual's opinions. Marcus shared that he thinks the best way to approach this exercise is to,

> …present a lot of statements and we ask people whether they agree or disagree with the statements. If the people who are homophobic see they are in the minority or even they are in the majority but the people on the other side have good arguments or good stories, then you can explore the extent of their homophobia (Marcus, personal communication, April 18, 2018).

Sometimes peer educators respond to homophobic arguments with "concrete examples of things that challenge their stereotypical thoughts. Then we ask how participants would they respond to those cases" (Gabe, personal communication, April 17, 2018). This is a good strategy which can be managed within a short period of time. Peer educators can use these open discussion about homophobia to get to other themes such as repudiation of femininity or anxiety around being a 'real man'. Also through maintaining conversation rules even when contentious topics are discussed peer educators interrupt masculine group norms of aggression and fighting for dominance.

Coming Out: The Power of Personal Narratives

During my interviews I heard two specific stories of peer educators coming out during workshops. In both cases the peer educators disclosed their own identities after discussion in a workshop led to a moment where they felt their personal testimony could have a powerful effect. Jasper is a transgender man and he told me about a time where he told his story during a workshop,

> We were doing the opinion continuum exercise…we started out by [saying] "if a girl wears a short skirt, she asks for it" well they didn't agree, so that was good. Then the teacher stepped in and he was like "What if a guy wears a short skirt?", and then they were like well that's kind of weird, he must be gay, and stuff like that. Then the teacher went on by saying - well I also know somebody who doesn't feel they're right in their body and stuff like that, and I was like, shall I share my experience? Cause we talked about that with each other as peer educators, like it's so nice if we can also share our personal experience if it's helps [during the workshop]. [We decided] it's good to not only talk about theory of what would be right or what is wrong.

> [So I came out] and it was the first time in that class that it was totally silent which was awesome. They were really curious and well they didn't expect it at all, and it was really nice. They were really surprised in a good way, they were just really curious and then at a certain moment a guy was like, ok so can we go on with another opinion now? It was like a 5 or 10 minute talk about that, and then, ok now we can go on. After that we talked with another teacher who wasn't there but some of the students came up to him because they were like, oh it was so interesting and he talked with them about it and that was surprising because I hadn't done that in a workshop yet. The situation hadn't really come up where that was necessary. But it was surprising in the way that it was kind of the perfect situation to do it (Jasper, personal communication, April 6, 2018).

This story is a great example of the positive possibilities of sharing personal narratives. For the participants of this workshop talking with Jasper about his gender was a dynamic learning moment. Based

off of the students reactions it's seems probable that these young men hadn't had any contact with

transgender people before, and so having this positive experience was an important step towards fostering

acceptance and curiosity around gender diversity. Something else notable about this story is the role of the

teacher who was working with the peer educators to prompt conversation. This exhibits how powerful it

can be when the teachers are also engaged and want to be involved with the workshop. This workshop

was a supportive atmosphere for Jasper to talk about his story and the teachers helped make that possible.

    The other instance that I heard about was when Lars shared his own identity after a class

expressed very blatant homophobia. After the young men in the workshop all said that they agreed with

the statement, 'gay men are not real men' and began to explain that, "all [gay men] wear makeup and use

botox, and they want a lot of attention and [are] super annoying" (Lars, personal communication, April 5,

2018), Lars felt conflicted but decided to share his story,

> I felt my heart beating and I was like shit, am I now going come out the closet here in front of them, because it could be a change maker, but the environment felt quite unsafe after all that had been said. So I was like, ok…and funny enough we talked earlier about group dynamics and how to make a change within a group, and if everyone is talking quite violently about something how can you break this cycle? So we came to a certain kind of conclusion [in the beginning of the workshop], that there is a responsibility but also an opportunity to make a small change. To just say something personally that you feel, and not say something about somebody else but just like "Hey I don't feel comfortable in this conversation I don't like to say this about women" or whatever.
>
> So I took that [agreement] and I said, "remember how we started off, how to make a change for yourself. So I will do it now as well", I said "I feel quite uncomfortable in this conversation because I am gay" and so I started to tell my story. And they just froze in a way. It was a hard moment because it was completely on the end of the workshop, so I didn't know how the dynamic would be. But I just felt that I couldn't let them go with the ideas [that they had shared]. I thought that I could be an idea of a gay man in their head as well.
>
> They didn't really [respond], they just froze in a way. We had a conversation about it but physically you could see they were like "shit, we didn't expect this". For everybody it was quite shocking in different ways. Also there I wasn't judgmental, I was [only making statements about my feelings]. It was pretty intense but we do what we can do and we hope for the best (Lars, personal communication, April 5, 2018).

This specific story exhibits a complicated moment which was intensified by lack of time. If the peer educators had more time with this group these homophobic statements could've presented a fruitful opportunity to talk about repudiation of femininity and gender norms, which could've led to Lars sharing his story. The strategy of direct contact between a heterosexual group and someone from the LGBTQ+ community can be very powerful but it is most impactful when it is a positive interaction (Jewell et. al, 2012). Because the moment when Lars came out was so emotionally charged, it might have created a boundary instead of challenging preconceived notions held by this group of young men. Lars shared that after this expression of blatant homophobia within the workshop, he felt that the only response which would make an impact would be direct contact with a human being,

> I think the only thing that can engage with that is a living example of a human being of flesh and blood and to have a dialogue with this person. [By interacting with] somebody that is just like you, I think that's the starting point of feeling a bit more comfortable [with sexual diversity]. You can talk a lot about it, [but] in the end you need to experience it, like oh shit all these ideas that I had are totally not true (Lars, personal communication, April 5, 2018).

Another complicated factor of direct contact is under what conditions will a heterosexual groups perceive an out-group member to be "just like them". Research shows that students in Amsterdam will accept people with marginalized sexualities as long as they don't stray from gender norms (Buijs et. al, 2011).Subsequently will direct contact with a gay man only reduce anxiety and enhance positive feelings among a group of adolescent boys if the 'out-group' member adheres to masculine behavioral norms? Could direct contact unintentionally reinscribe attitudes about only masculine gay men being worthy of acceptance, while any men who are feminine remaining illegible? While this is something to think critically about, challenging young men to shift their views on non-normative gender performances is complex work which cannot be accomplished inside one experiences of direct contact. If direct contact is going to do work to disrupt gender norms there must be preparation before and after a meeting with individuals from the LGBTQ+ community. These moments of direct contact are also emotionally taxing

for the person who is coming out. In my interview with Jens he mentioned that there hadn't been

discussion of peer educators coming out during workshops before it happened,

> I know that some of our peer educators have disclosed themselves in front a group and I think that
> is a very strong experience. I know from other organizations working on LGBT issues that this is
> one of the strongest things that you can do. But we haven't prepared with them for that. I'm really
> moved by their stories about this I also felt kind of responsible, oh my god - what did we put them
> in (Jens, personal communication, April 11, 2018).

In the future it will be meaningful to talk with peer educators about the possibility of coming out and

discuss how the Imagine project community can be supportive both before, during, and after workshops

where LGBTQ+ peer educators share their stories. When LGBTQ+ peer educators tell their stories during

workshops it is best if the other peer educator, and/or the teacher who is present can help to create a

supportive framework in which the coming out can happen.

In summary, during the current workshops LGBTQ+ peer educators have only come out when the

moment calls for it. At its best this strategy can be very positive and met with curiosity and interest, and at

its worst peer educators have to navigate sharing their personal stories in an emotionally charged

atmosphere. When it is emotionally charged the interaction can become confrontational instead of

creating an environment where dialogue could occur. This is not to say that LGBTQ+ peer educators

should not share their stories, and there will be situations where no amount of preparation will be able to

mitigate unfortunate dynamics, but there is work that can make peer educators more prepared for these

opportunities in the future.

Straight Peer Educators Relationship to Sexual and Gender Diversity

In my interview with Gabe, he mentioned that having one straight peer educator and one gay peer

educator facilitate workshops together was best practice,

> I identify as straight (in general) and it really helps to have, for instance, someone who is gay next
> to you, because [they can give] personal examples [when] that's appropriate, whenever that
> might help. There's also a tension there, like how personal should you get, can you get...but in
> most cases it really helps because we should be role models, and we're not the teacher having to
> keep the students in check. We're also there to facilitate a conversation [and] to actually show
> them how masculinity can also be filled in or what types of masculinity there are or could be... I

> think that personal [narratives] really help. But I think that's difficult to do if you only have a straight person there or only a gay person (Gabe, personal communication, April 17, 2018).

Here Gabe reflects on the strength of both gay and straight peer educators acting as role models of diverse masculinities. While LGBTQ+ peer educators do offer a very valuable intervention strategy when they tell their stories, it is also very important that LGBTQ+ peer educators aren't solely responsible to educate about gender and sexual diversity in the workshops. Within my interviews I noticed that the peer educators who did not have direct experience with LGBTQ+ identities felt like they could not directly advocate for those communities. However I think there is a difference between claiming an identity which you don't have, and standing as an informed ally for marginalized communities. When I asked Henry how he thinks the Imagine Project should combat homophobia moving forward he said, "I don't see myself as the advocate to talk about it because I'm not homosexual myself" (Henry, personal communication, April 9, 2018). He went on to tell me about a specific workshop where he wished he had more information about gender diversity,

> I often know what the group needs and I'm giving them that information, but I don't know if I'm giving them the correct information because I don't have any experience and I don't have any pre-knowledge. In a workshop the participants had a misconception about [transgender vs intersex] and I was trying to give them information but I didn't know that much about trans stuff. All the conditions were good to keep talking about that but I didn't have the information. Because that was a question that came out of the group – they were very interested and they wanted to know more about the subject – but I didn't know more about the subject and I didn't want to feed them wrong information" (J, personal communication, April 9, 2018).

For the peer educators who are not connected to the LGBTQ+ community, seeking out resources and educating themselves about gender and sexual diversity is an important step to be able to respond to fruitful opportunities such as the one recounted above, and also generally make workshops less heteronormative and more inclusive.

<u>Conclusion</u>

Homophobia is often defined as anti-gay attitudes or behaviors, and strategies to combat it emphasize acceptance from the dominant heterosexual society, alongside projects which empower LGBTQ+ individuals. An angle which is often left out of the discussions of homophobia are the ways in which homophobia is deeply implicated when talking about masculine identity formation. In the construction of hegemonic masculinity, homosexuality becomes equivalent to not being a 'real man', and therefore being gay represents not only a non-normative sexuality but also any gender performance which departs from masculine norms. The specter of homosexuality manifest in men having to constantly prove their masculinity to one another by proving their heterosexuality. This connection reveals that homophobia extends beyond negative feelings towards individuals with marginalized sexualities and is also a gendered practice. Consequently, by including exercises which promote conversation about homophobia in the Imagine Project workshops, peer educators can address foundational aspects of toxic masculinity.

This qualitative research study aimed to explore what strategies peer educators can employ to combat homophobia within the Imagine Project workshops. Through interviews with 5 peer educators and the director of Emancipator, various themes surrounding homophobia, masculinity, and intervention facilitation were discovered.

First, homophobia was present in the Imagine Project workshops in three ways: implicitly, explicitly, and through the compulsory heterosexuality which workshop participants often enforced. Implicit homophobia refers to time when workshop participants take part in relational performances of masculinity which depend on rejection of femininity and assertions of heterosexuality. The peer educators talked about these practices as a part of masculinity more than as homophobia. The peer educators mostly connected the word 'homophobia' to the explicit manifestations of anti-gay attitudes and behaviors. When

workshop participants did express blatant anti-gay attitudes, peer educators were often shocked, which reflects the fact that while homophobia is present throughout Dutch society it mostly manifests in very subtle ways. A goal which was expressed by the peer educators was making workshops less heteronormative. This entailed including more gender and sexual diversity in the workshop curriculum and making space for LGBTQ+ workshop participants to share their stories. The latter goal is somewhat unattainable within the current limitations of the project. The former goal can be acted upon by the peer educators within the current limitations. Something else which came to light was that heteronormativity isn't always a bad thing. Sometimes by leaning into heteronormativity peer educators were able to establish a connection with workshop participants which could lead to more vulnerable conversation about gender and sexual diversity later on.

Second, in response to the limitations of the Imagine Project peer educators redefine their expectations and create new metrics for success. The project faces a lot of structural limitations because funding is tight and the project is run by a very small team. There are only eight peer educators and they work as volunteers, and so the amount of time energy which can be devoted to this project is also limited by that. The workshops are mostly conducted in schools which presents limitations due to unfamiliar contexts for the peer educators, unpredictable positions of the teachers, and limited time with the students. In the face of these limitations peer educators define success as 'planting a seed'. Planting a seed represents beginning, strengthening, or continuing a conversation with the workshop participants about gender roles, stereotypes, and gendered expectations. Something which is very important within this conception of success is starting a dialogue with students, a facilitating a space which is safe from participants to open up. Another limitation faced by the Imagine Project is that they are only reaching certain parts of the population. The idea that only young men of color or young men in the lower levels of the education system perpetuate sexual violence leads to a discrepancy where upper-middle class ethnically Dutch students aren't being challenged to think about their prejudices. In the long term the

Imagine Project should take on a community based approach to working for change, because only when young people and the people who surround them are talking about and interrogating gender inequality will true transformative change take place.

Finally, despite the challenges peer educators do find ways to address homophobia within the workshops. The strategies which they use include using language to disturb heteronormativity, keeping an open dialogue in response to explicit homopia, sharing personal narratives, and for LGBTQ+ peer educators coming out during workshops. In order for the open dialogue strategy to be applicable in a range of contexts, there will have to be more exercises in the workshops which directly prompt conversation about sexual diversity. Non-cis and non-straight peer educators sharing their own stories is a very powerful tool for making change. In the future it is important that the peer educator community prepares with LGBTQ+ peer educators for emotionally charged moments where they do choose to share their stories. It is also necessary the peer educators who don't have experience in the LGBTQ+ community educate themselves so they can educate about gender and sexual diversity with confidence. As the Imagine Project draws to a close this June, I hope that my work will be a valuable resource in conversations about what directions the Imagine Project should take next.

I hope this research will act as an impetus for future research on masculinity, homophobia, and gender justice initiatives. Future research could focus on how Dutch youth conceptualize the connections between homophobia and masculinity, and pay particular attention to interventions around gender and sexuality in Dutch schools and analyze the strengths and challenges of different projects. Another important topic to investigate is how gender transformative interventions can unintentionally support racist and xenophobic discourses which construct homophobia as not a Dutch problem but the problem of the 'backwards other'.

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Lars, Personal Interview (Imagine Project), 5 April 2018, Phone Interview

Marcus, Personal Interview (Imagine Project), 18 April 2018, SIT Office

Appendices

Appendix A: Imagine Conference Travel Information

IMAGINE CONFERENCE, June 13th 2018
TRANSPORTATION TO THE CONFERENCE
Welcome to Amsterdam!

After arriving at Schiphol Airport there are a couple ways to reach the conference center.

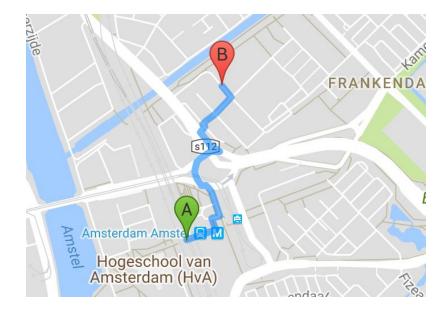More information can be found at: **www.schiphol.nl/en/travel-from-schiphol/**

See public transportation info and trip planning info at: **https://www.ns.nl/en** or **https://9292.nl/en**

Any further questions can be sent to: **imagine@emancipator.nl**

Taking the Train:

After collecting baggage and going through customs continue to Schiphol Plaza. In the plaza there are clearly marked kiosks where you can buy a ticket directly to Central Station.

1. Buy a train ticket to Amstel Station. You can choose between a one way ticket to Amstel Station or a reloadable OV chip-card which can be used for the metro, trams, and buses in the city.
2. Take the train from **Train Station Schiphol Airport to Train Station Duivendrecht.** Take either the:
- NS Intercity Train towards Lelystad Centrum,
- NS Intercity Train towards Amersfoort Schothorst or,
- NS Intercity Train towards Enschede.
- Departure times are announced throughout Schiphol Plaza, trains depart every 15 minutes.
3. After arriving at Train Station Duivendrecht switch to NS Sprinter Train towards Uitgeest.
4. Take the NS Sprinter Train towards Uitgeest from **Train Station Duivendrecht to Amstelstation.**
5. Take the main exit from Amstelstation and you will be able to see Hotel Casa.
6. Walk 6 minutes to Hotel Casa Amsterdam - exact address Eerste Ringdijkstraat 4 (see below).

Taking a taxi:

After collecting baggage and going through customs continue to Schiphol Plaza. There is a taxi rank in front of Schiphol Plaza. Take a taxi to Hotel Casa Amsterdam -exact address Eerste Ringdijkstraat 4.

Accessibility:

Trains from Schiphol are wheelchair accessible. The Dutch rail (Nederlandse Spoorwegen - NS) staff can help people in wheelchairs board the train.

Request assistance with your wheelchair online at:

https://www.ns.nl/en/travel-information/traveling-with-a-functional-disability

Regular taxis at Schiphol do not have room for wheelchairs. For special transport, phone BIOS Groep on **+31 (0)20 653 0500.**

For help with accessibility requests contact **imagine@emancipator.nl.**

Find more information about accessibility of public transportation in Amsterdam at:

https://www.schiphol.nl/en/page/faq-accessibility-and-facilities/

https://en.gvb.nl/reizen/toegankelijk-ov

Appendix B : Imagine Conference Tourism Information

IMAGINE CONFERENCE, June 13th 2018
AMSTERDAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Welcome to Amsterdam!

Here are some resources for planning your trip to the city.

These are great sites with information about what's happening in the city. There is information about events happening during your visit, tourist attractions, and history of Amsterdam:

- **I Amsterdam** - https://www.iamsterdam.com/en
- **Amsterdam Info -** https://www.amsterdam.info/
- **Lonely Planet Reccomendations -** https://www.lonelyplanet.com/the-netherlands/amsterdam/

Here is a website with specific information about LGBTQ+ history and sites in Amsterdam:
- **LGBTQI Info -** https://www.iamsterdam.com/en/see-and-do/whats-on/gayamsterdam

Museums and Sightseeing

There are many beautiful museums and historical sites in Amsterdam. Here is a list of the top attractions in the city:

- Rijksmuseum - https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/
- Tropenmuseum - https://www.tropenmuseum.nl/nl
- Stedelijk Museum - https://www.stedelijk.nl/en
- Van Gogh Museum - https://www.vangoghmuseum.com/en
- Anne Frank Huis - http://www.annefrank.org/
- Amsterdam Lookout - https://www.adamlookout.com/
- Vondel Park - https://www.hetvondelpark.net/

Queer Clubs and Bars in Amsterdam

Amsterdam has a vibrant LGBTQ community and nightlife. Here are a range of clubs and bars which offer events and parties. Some have specific themes or are only open certain days - all information can be found on their websites!

- Club NYX / Bar Exit http://clubnyx.nl/ Reguliersdwarsstraat 42, 1017 BM
- SoHo https://www.soho-amsterdam.com/ Reguliersdwarsstraat 36, 1017 BM
- Taboo http://taboobar.nl/ Reguliersdwarsstraat 45, 1017 BK
- Café Reality http://www.realitybar.nl/ Reguliersdwarsstraat 129, 1017 BL
- Queers Cafe http://www.queerscafe.nl/ Amstel 60, 1017 AC
- FAME http://fame.bar/ Amstel 50, 1017 AB
- AIR Amsterdam https://www.air.nl/en/ Amstelstraat 16, 1017 DA
- Club Church http://www.clubchurch.nl/ Kerkstraat 52, 1017 GM
    - Queer party Thursday night.
- Café Saarein http://www.saarein2.nl/ Elandsstraat 119-HS, 1016 RX
- Prik http://prikamsterdam.nl/ Spuistraat 109, 1012 SV
- De School https://www.deschoolamsterdam.nl/en/ Doctor Jan van Breemenstraat 1, 1056 AB
- Lellebel http://www.lellebel.nl/ Utrechtsestraat 4, 1017 VN
- Dirty Dicks http://www.dirtydicksamsterdam.com/ Warmoesstraat 86, 1012 JH
- Eagle Amsterdam http://www.eagleamsterdam.com/ Warmoesstraat 90,1012 JH
- Spijker Bar http://spijkerbar.nl/ Kerkstraat 4, 1017 GL Amsterdam
- Shelter Amsterdam https://shelteramsterdam.nl/ Overhoeksplein 3, 1031 KS
- De Trut http://www.trutfonds.nl/ Bilderdijkstraat 165-E, 1053 KP
    - Queer party Sunday night.
- Vrankrijk http://vrankrijk.org/ Spuistraat 216, 1012 RB
    - Queer party Wednesday night.

Appendix C: Gender Neutral Bathroom Information

Introduction: Why Gender Neutral Bathrooms are Important

Excerpted from Heartland Trans Wellness Group
http://transwellness.org/resources/educational-materials/gender-neutral-bathrooms/

Introduction:
Some people often feel uncomfortable when using segregated restrooms. Female/male sex-segregated bathrooms are not accessible spaces that everyone can use. Many people are subject to harassment, intimidation, legal charges, and violence on an everyday basis.

Transgender, genderqueer, and/or gender non-conforming people are particularly affected by bathroom segregation because of the visible gender differences that may not correlate with cultural gender norms. Even in cities, towns, and college campuses that are generally considered "liberal" places where it is "easier" to be gender non-conforming, many people are still harassed in both women's and men's rooms. [1]

Many non-transgender and gender conforming people also experience difficulty and inconvenience in sex-segregated bathrooms. Parents with differently-gendered children are not able to accompany them in gender-segregated bathrooms (a mother with her son or a father with his daughter). Disabled people with differently gendered attendants or family members are not able to bring them into gender-specific, multi-stall bathrooms.

"Gender-neutral" bathrooms are typically a single-stall, lockable bathroom available to people of all genders and sexes. Gender-neutral bathrooms provide a safe, private facility for transgender, genderqueer, and gender non-conforming people, families with children, and people with disabilities who may need assistance.

Best Practice for Signage
Excerpted from the Washington Post
https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2016/06/06/what-should-be-the-restroom-sign-of-the-future/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.0cef366ab372

The typical 'gender neutral' signage which is a half 'male' figure (pants) and half 'female' figure (skirt) actually reinscribes the gender binary instead of interrupting it. Below are some alternative options for signage trans communities endorse. This is an example of a sign for a singular gender neutral bathroom designed by Matt Chase.

Design by Rusty Cook:

"Cook: My proposition for the future of the icon is that we remove gender from bathroom iconography altogether. The singular gender-neutral bathroom logo should be a toilet, focusing on the function of the room, not who can or should use it.

For existing gendered bathrooms, I propose a system of icons that includes a urinal, sink and baby-changing table so individuals can choose the bathroom that serves their needs."

Another way to communicate this information is to write "Sitting" or "No Urinals" for bathrooms which only have sitting toilets, and "Standing" or "Urinals" for bathrooms which have urinals and sitting toilets.

While it is important to aspire to a time when gender can be removed from bathroom iconography, for now it is still important to note that bathrooms are for "all genders".

Frequently Asked Questions / Activity Guide
Excerpted from the Sylvia Rivera Law Center
https://srlp.org/resources/toilet-training-companion-guide-for-activists-and-educators/

1. If we had all-gender bathrooms, wouldn't women be less safe?

Many people's first reaction to providing gender non-specific bathrooms is that women's safety will be compromised. However, an analysis of the safety precautions in bathrooms suggests that women are not currently protected by the existence of gender-specific bathrooms. Women's bathrooms do not provide any physical barrier to potential predators, who can just as easily walk through an unlocked door that reads "women" as any other unlocked door. Gender segregation in bathrooms does not prevent sexual assault, and if anything, provides an illusion of safety that is not true. To increase the safety of bathrooms, we would recommend creating single-user bathrooms, providing bathroom doors that go from floor to ceiling without gaps, and eliminating the gender segregation of bathrooms that results in severe access issues for transgender and gender non-conforming people.

2. All-gender bathrooms will make people uncomfortable.

It is true that for people who are used to using gender-specific bathrooms, using gender non-specific bathrooms may feel strange or uncomfortable. Often times, social change that increases access for an excluded group and eliminated discrimination requires a reform of social practices that makes people who have not been negatively affected by the existing arrangements uncomfortable. However, discomfort or modesty, when compared with the inability to engage in basic necessary biological functions at work, school, and in public spaces, cannot be prioritized. As we make changes to increase access and reduce discrimination, we must all commit to adjusting to those changes.

3. The female clients/students/customers at my agency/school/business will not be able to accept using the bathroom with transgender women. Many are survivors of sexual violence, and may be triggered by using the bathroom with someone with masculine body parts.

When we work with populations that have survived violence, it is essential to try to create safe spaces to accommodate their needs. Many of us work with populations that are diverse, with different clients/students/customers having survived different types of oppressions, and sometimes even having misconceptions or biased beliefs about each other. The proper response to a misperception that transwomen are not 'real women' or are sexual predators or a threat to non-trans women is not to exclude trans women from women's spaces or facilities, but to help educate any people who are concerned about inclusion and dispel myths about trans people. Excluding people because other have biased misconceptions about them only increases oppression and discrimination, and does not work to create safe spaces.

Activity Ideas:

1. In a public place (at your job, school, while out running errands, attending a public event) try to locate a non-gendered or unisex bathroom. Did you find one? How long did it take? Did you have to ask someone in order to locate it?

2. Have you ever seen someone in the bathroom you thought might not "belong" there? What did you do? How did you feel? Why did you do what you did?

3. If you generally have no problem using the bathroom typically expected for your sex, spend some time thinking about using the other bathroom. (This is best accomplished in a public place near the bathrooms. Extra credit if you really have to go when you undertake this activity). Hang around for a while.

a. What would it take for you to go into the "wrong" bathroom?

b. How does the prospect of doing so make you feel?

c. Would you feel comfortable walking right in?

d. What other thoughts or experiences did you have during this activity?

Sample Discussion Questions for the Classroom

Other Resources:

- Refuge Restrooms
- Transgender Law Center "Peeing in Peace"
- Transgender Law Center Recommendations for Schools
- UC San Diego – program example
- Safe2Pee (Archived)