

## Concept Note: Singamadoda Reading Group

### Program Overview.

Patriarchy is a socio-political system that, primarily, unduly privileges men at the expense of women<sup>1</sup>. Much scholarly activity has been taking place to study patriarchy and how it affects society but much of this study of patriarchy have been largely conducted in relation to women's body<sup>2</sup>. This often point is well demonstrable on how many of the intervention strategies, projects and campaigns to disrupt [and ultimately dismantle patriarchy] mainly target women – this shortcoming cuts across society.

The purpose of the Singamadoda Reading Group, therefore, is to principally study patriarchy – one of the most fundamental socio-political systems that affects men – in relation to the men's body. The departure point of the Singamadoda Reading Group is to compliment Singamadoda Programme in the Transformation Office by engaging literature that firstly make men aware that they are also gendered – that is to say manhood is not a neutral gender category unaffected by socio-political systems such as patriarchy<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/58555431-understanding-patriarchy> accessed on 12/04/2023.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ratele, K, 2016, Liberating Masculinities.

Secondly, engaging this subversive literature will clarify some of the key concepts and categories that affect men's life daily, furthermore, illuminate that patriarchy is not in anyone's best interest – including men. This will be done by reading material that is contextually relevant and clearly shows the strong link between some of the most pressing problems that affect men such as high rate of suicide, high rate of homicide feelings of emasculation, despondency, intra-male violence, denial of emotional well-being, mutilating oneself to fit into the overarching masculine identity imposed by patriarchy<sup>4</sup>.

Lastly, the Singamadoda Reading Group is an intellectual and scholarly commitment to study how patriarchy stifles and obfuscates healthy and meaningful relationships within and amongst the genders. This is to herald the inward journey of healing, sparking curiosity, challenging harmful masculinities and ignite participants to imagine progressive, liberatory and fulfilling masculinities.

### **Objectives.**

- Develop a more scholarly in-depth understanding of patriarchy and its effect on manhood, men masculinities.
- Compliment the singamadoda Program by creating a space for continued engagement, research-based reflections, and the unlearning/relearning.
- Critical reflection and engagement with subversive literature on men and masculinities to better understand link between dominate masculinities/male identities and the daily struggles faced by men such as suicide, homicide, drug abuse etc.
- Foster the imagination and creation of progressive, liberatory and fulfilling masculinities.

### **Program Activities.**

- Students already engaged in the singamadoda redefining positive masculinity will be invited to take part in the reading group and a MS teams' group will be created to share reading materials.
- The reading materials will consist mainly of articles, essays and occasionally books, some of which are pre-selected (see reading list attached) however

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<sup>4</sup> Langa, M, 2020, Becoming Men.

students will be asked for their input and suggestions for reading material in the course of the SRPM program.

- The reading group, reading material and call for suggestions will be made in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the SRPM program and reading group discussion will take place thereafter once every 2 or so weeks. Group discussions will be arranged via teams or WhatsApp groups if necessary.
- The reading group will not however be limited to SRPM participants as invites for discussions and the related theme/reading material will be advertised generally as well.