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Moulding the teacher: factors shaping teacher enactment of comprehensive sexuality education policy in Ethiopia

Marielle L. J. Le Mat ^a, Esther A. J. Miedema ^b, Siyane A. Amentie^c and Hüllya Kosar-Altinyelken ^a

^aDepartment of Child Development and Education, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, the Netherlands;

^bAmsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR), University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, the Netherlands; ^cDepartment of Comparative and International Education, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

ABSTRACT

Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) is promoted around the world to improve young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights, and to address gender-based violence. Teachers play crucial roles in enacting CSE, yet only few studies have placed them centrally to understand CSE re-contextualisation in schools. Hence, drawing on interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations with 56 participants, this paper presents how CSE teachers enact CSE policy and which factors affect their enactments at schools in Ethiopia. The paper highlights that while CSE teachers were typically conceptualised as 'facilitators' of the CSE initiative presented here, in practice teachers seemed to perform what might be understood as 'activist' roles within and beyond the classroom and school. Despite this activism, teachers' possibilities to address gender-based violence still seemed limited, in part due to lack of guidance from policy and programme designers, lack of support from community and school management, and socio-economic factors.

KEYWORDS

Comprehensive sexuality education; teachers; enactment; gender; Ethiopia

1. Introduction

Research over the past decade has highlighted the deeply rooted gender inequalities that persist within education systems, despite near gender-parity in enrolment rates (Leach, Dunne, and Salvi 2014; Parkes 2016). Studies in Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, have revealed that gender-based violence is prevalent in schools, taking various forms such as bullying, corporal punishment, and verbal, physical, and sexual violence (Bhana 2012; Leach, Dunne, and Salvi 2014; Parkes 2016). Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) is regarded as an important means to promote young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), a goal that is broadly seen as including addressing gender-based violence and enhancing gender relations more broadly. Despite controversies surrounding CSE in many parts around the world (Miedema, Le Mat, and Hague,

CONTACT Marielle L. J. Le Mat  m.l.j.lemat@uva.nl  Department of Child Development and Education, University of Amsterdam, Nieuwe Achtergracht 127, Amsterdam 1018 WS, the Netherlands

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under review), the subject is increasingly taught in schools (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO 2015b]).

CSE teachers play crucial roles in enacting CSE policy; they are an important source of SRHR-related knowledge, including on gender equality (Clarke 2008; Ollis 2014). However, studies also point out that while teachers can play critical roles in transforming gender relations, they can often do more harm than good—(unwittingly) reinforcing gender regimes, and/or perpetuating sexual and gender-based violence themselves (Altinyelken and Le Mat 2018; Clarke 2008; Parkes 2016). CSE teachers have also been considered a barrier to successful CSE implementation because they teach sexuality education in ways that differed from programme designers' intentions (Vanwesenbeeck et al. 2016).

In this paper, we aim to improve understanding of the ways in which teachers enact and re-contextualise CSE policy, and their reasons for doing so. To understand teacher enactment, we attend not only to what teachers do, but also to teachers' interpretations of the policy. In the case of CSE, interpretations of the policy also relate to the controversial nature of the policy, and teachers' views on its appropriateness. We also examine the dynamic interplay between teachers' beliefs and practices, taking into account the school and wider socio-economic context (Ball, Maguire, and Braun 2012; Altinyelken 2011b; Heslop et al. 2017). We focus on CSE teachers, students and community members' views as to how they view CSE teachers' roles and responsibilities in implementing the policy, and pay specific attention to their roles in addressing gender-based violence. This paper engages with the following questions:

- (1) How do CSE teachers, students, and community members view the roles and responsibilities of CSE teachers in enacting CSE and addressing gender-based violence?
- (2) How do CSE teachers enact these roles and responsibilities?
- (3) What factors shape teacher enactment of CSE policy?

The engagement with these questions responds to an empirical gap in current literature concerning CSE teachers and specifically how they seek to address gender-based violence and why (see, e.g. Bhana 2012; Parkes 2016). Additionally, the paper contributes to ongoing debates about teachers' positions in policy directions on gender-based violence in education.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. CSE teachers

CSE is defined as education that equips children and young people with knowledge, skills, and values empowering them to realise and make informed choices about their health, well-being, sexual and social relationships, and protection of violence and their rights (UNESCO 2018). CSE can be understood as a global policy, particularly promoted by UNESCO, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Over the past decade, national governments have increasingly adopted CSE – all countries in East and Southern Africa included in UNESCO's review having taken up CSE or programmes similar to CSE in their national

policies (UNESCO 2015b). However, the integration of CSE features in national curricula and policies does not necessarily mean that, at the level of the school, it is delivered as intended (UNESCO 2015b). Teachers have key mediating roles in this regard, but only few studies have tried to understand teachers' views on, and factors affecting their enactment of, CSE in schools. Studies that are available, have been carried out with a focus on implementation (Vanwesenbeeck et al. 2016), or discuss only a selected number of factors that might influence teacher enactment, most notably 'culture' (Browes 2015; De Haas and Hutter 2018). Hence, with this paper, we aim to move beyond an implementation focus by analysing how teachers shape and re-contextualise CSE policy at school level, and include a broad range of factors that might influence such enactment.

Various international organisations have developed guidelines for CSE teachers, with a view to – in the case of UNESCO (2015a), for example – 'equip teachers with the basic knowledge and skills necessary to deliver effective sexuality education in the classroom' (12). In a similar vein, the '*It's All One*' guidelines (International Sexuality and HIV Curriculum Working Group 2009) are designed to enable educators to address individual and social factors affecting young peoples' SRH. Both guidelines provide teaching tips, detail examples of activities CSE teachers can organise, and provide definitions of essential vocabulary. These guidelines also state that CSE can prevent gender-based violence, but actual directions on *how* teachers can address gender-based violence remain vague. For example, the '*It's All One*' guidelines speak of teachers providing a safe learning environment and recommend teachers to refer students to appropriate sources of (additional) support in their sections on gender and violence (International Sexuality and HIV Curriculum Working Group 2009). In a section on gender, the UNESCO guidelines include exercises to stimulate teachers to consider, for instance, how gender norms influence their teaching. However, in the same section, the guidelines urge teachers to teach 'sexuality education free from gender biases' (UNESCO 2015a, 211). Just how such gender bias-free teaching is to be done is not expanded on and thus remains open for interpretation.

Interestingly, the most recent UNESCO guidelines on CSE mention the imperative to create 'local' support for the global CSE policy. The guidelines stress: 'the need to engage and build support among the custodians of culture in a given community, in order to adapt the content to the local cultural context.' (UNESCO 2018, 84). The '*It's All One*' guidelines also emphasise cultural dynamics, but state that because 'the guidelines [apply] universal principles' these can be 'used in many cultures' (International Sexuality and HIV Curriculum Working Group 2009, 7). Scholars have argued that CSE is typically framed as a 'global' and culturally progressive policy by international organisations, while resistance to CSE is considered a result of 'local' and culturally traditional values (Roodsaz 2018). Such framing of the modern progressive versus the traditional conservative produces a binary that results in processes of 'Othering' and might obstruct identifying policy priorities that are contextually pertinent (Le Mat et al. 2019; Miedema 2018; Miedema and Oduro 2017; Roodsaz 2018).

Against this backdrop, CSE teachers have often been seen as an obstacle to CSE enactment because they modify CSE content when teaching, skipping or shortening certain lessons. Teachers have also been criticised for their lack of flexibility and confidence in facilitating participatory teaching styles (Vanwesenbeeck et al. 2016). In

explaining these challenges, research has tended to focus on teachers' own beliefs and how dominant views in the broader community influence teacher enactment of CSE (Ahmed et al. 2009; Francis and DePalma 2014; Helleve et al. 2009; Vanwesenbeeck et al. 2016). For instance, studies conducted in South Africa and Uganda indicate that teachers were proponents of abstinence, and struggled to teach young people about condom use (Ahmed et al. 2009; De Haas and Hutter 2018). Research with teachers in South Africa revealed that they claimed scientific neutrality in their teaching to avoid 'cultural conflicts' (Helleve et al. 2009; see also Francis and DePalma 2014). In Nigeria, teachers reported to be reluctant to teach sex education because of socio-cultural and religious factors, lack of teacher training in delivery of sex education, and poor motivation (Oshi, Nakalema, and Oshi 2005). However, as Ahmed et al. (2009) show, not only teachers' own beliefs influence their teaching of sexuality education, so do socio-economic factors, school environment, as well as available teaching materials. For example, studies on teachers' roles in addressing gender-based violence highlight that while teachers expressed strong (negative) feelings about instances of gender-based violence, they did not intervene because of (institutionalised) culture of silence on the matter and, indeed, lack of school management or community support (Bhana 2015; Meyer 2008).

2.2. Teacher enactment and policy re-contextualisation

Research has revealed that global education policies are often re-contextualised at school level to fit local interpretations of global policy priorities, and to respond to certain social, economic and political realities or concerns (Altinyelken 2011a; Verger, Novelli, and Altinyelken 2018; Unterhalter and North 2017). Policy re-contextualisation is thus defined as a process of translation of policies between global, national, and local networks that reconstitute policies in different ways, influenced by, for instance, institutional, material, cultural, and scalar factors (Verger, Novelli, and Altinyelken 2018). At the level of the school, central to understanding re-contextualisation of global policies is teacher enactment. Enactment refers to the dynamic ways policies are made and remade at school, shaped by interpretations of the policy, the importance attached to it, contextual priorities, and how the policy is used, and negotiated (Ball, Maguire, and Braun 2012; Parkes 2016). Against this backdrop, teachers' enactment of CSE, possible modification of, and/or resistance to, CSE, can thus be understood as a reaction to, and an interaction with, policy ideas advocated by international organisations, and as part of the re-contextualisation process.

Studies of global education policies have revealed multiple factors that affect enactment at school level. These factors can include school history, location, performance, and its population, which largely influence how a policy change is interpreted and taken up (Ball, Maguire, and Braun 2012). Feasibility of effecting a policy change at classroom level also depends on the teacher, and is influenced by, among other factors, teachers' personal beliefs, their position in the school, how they interpret the policy change (Rogan 2007), and the extent to which they relate to it. For example, where some teachers may act as advocates to successfully make the policy change work, others may act as critics (Ball, Maguire, and Braun 2012; Altinyelken 2011b). Furthermore, teacher enactment may also be affected by teachers' positions in the community (Barrett 2005; Unterhalter and North 2017). For instance, teachers in Tanzania spoke of seeing their roles as much more than

being a school teacher alone, instead referring to notions of honour and responsibility towards their communities (Barrett 2005). The notion of honour and responsibility also meant though, that these teachers were highly vulnerable to criticism voiced by the community. Finally, teacher relationships within the school and community can be influenced by gender and power hierarchies (Connell 2012; Unterhalter and North 2017), especially in the case of enacting controversial policies related to gender and sexuality, such as CSE (Humphreys 2013; Vanner 2017).

In trying to understand teachers' enactment of CSE, it is important to highlight teachers' changing roles under new global policies. Over the past decades, teachers' roles have become increasingly technocratic, and the status of the teacher profession has lowered significantly in Sub-Saharan Africa (Assie-Lumumba 2012). The influence of the international development actors in schools has also had its effect on teachers; Pot (2018) describes how teachers in Malawi act as 'development brokers', advocating messages from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to wider communities. Pot (2018) revealed that selected teachers became important resources for NGOs, and enjoy a relatively higher social status in their communities due to their affiliation to international organisations. At the same time, such association with development or the 'cosmopolitan' may also lead to teachers feeling alienated from their communities (Barrett 2005). Such dynamics may affect policy enactment – possibly leading to more responsibilities, and/or vulnerability of teachers.

3. Context: Ethiopia

The gender gap in enrolment rates in primary and secondary schools in Ethiopia is closing (Gender Parity Index was 0.90 and 0.91, respectively, in 2017 (MoE 2017)). Yet, gender inequalities remain; in 2013, the share of female teachers in schools was only 37% for primary schools and 15% for secondary schools (UN Women 2014), and there are worrying reports of gender-based violence in schools (Altinyelken and Le Mat 2018; Parkes et al. 2017).

3.1. Policy context

Both the Ministry of Health (MoH) and MoE of Ethiopia have signed the regional Ministerial Commitment on CSE and sexual and reproductive health services for adolescents and young people in Eastern and Southern African in South Africa in 2013, committing to provide CSE to all youth and adolescents. However, despite this commitment, the policy has been strongly resisted by some national actors who regard CSE as an imposition of Western values and state concerns as to the cultural 'appropriateness' of CSE (Le Mat et al. 2019). Part of the controversy is also related to CSE being taught in mixed-sex classrooms, and the discussion of sexuality outside the context of marriage. These concerns regarding CSE also became apparent during the present study.

In Ethiopia, CSE programmes are not integrated in the formal school curriculum but are extra-curricular school activities, dependent on international actors and NGOs. Notably, NGOs did not have the mandate to work on rights-based agendas in Ethiopia at the time of fieldwork (as stated in the NGO Proclamation 2009, which is currently

being revised). Hence, CSE was embedded in an ‘SRH’ agenda in Ethiopia, where the final ‘R’ that stands for ‘rights’ was omitted from the global ‘SRHR’ agenda.

The teaching profession has been reported to be increasingly technocratic and managerial, and teacher training to be of poor quality in Ethiopia (Dahlstrom and Lemma 2008; Tessema 2007). Teachers are also more and more held to account to communities, similar to health professionals (see Maes et al. 2015). Parent-teacher-student associations, for example, may operate as a platform for social control of teachers by the community, and vice versa (Mitchell 2017).

With this context in mind, CSE teachers are the central enactors of a highly controversial policy, and understanding their views and ways of re-contextualising the policy sheds light on (a) the perceived appropriateness of the policy, and (b) cultural, socio-economic, and political dynamics that need to be considered in promoting and evaluating CSE.

3.2. CSE programme in schools

The CSE programme that this study engages with is designed to provide young people with information and skills deemed necessary to take care of their sexual health during 16 lessons of approximately 2 h (though observations revealed that lessons took no longer than 1 h). One lesson is fully dedicated to the topic gender-based violence. The programme is designed in a Western-European country and contextualised by an Ethiopian NGO to the national context. CSE programme developers conceive the role of teachers to ‘facilitate’ the programme, rather than engage with the content. School teachers receive an initial six to seven-day training from the implementing NGO about CSE and participatory teaching methods before they start teaching the programme. CSE teachers receive a three-day refresher training at least once after they have started teaching CSE. Throughout interviews, teachers expressed this refresher was a vital element to successfully teaching CSE, and indicated their desire for more follow-up training to better enable them to deal with challenges in teaching CSE. CSE teachers were not remunerated for facilitating the programme.

The town where this study took place is situated in Oromia region close to a main road connecting the town to the capital city Addis Ababa, and hosts many high school students from neighbouring villages. The town is characterised by high levels of unemployment, including among youth. During recent years, growing unrest in Oromia region has affected the town. This unrest has also affected the CSE programme, teachers mentioning they had to pause the programme for periods of time, and some indicating they had worried the programme would completely discontinue.

4. Methods

Between May and July 2017, semi-structured interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted in combination with non-participant observation of CSE classes in four schools in and around the above-mentioned provincial town. Interviews were held with CSE teachers, school directors, members of parent-teacher-student associations, and parents. Interviews and FGDs were conducted in Afaan Oromo or Amharic, depending on the preference of participants, and were voice recorded with participants’

permission. FGDs were held with CSE students, CSE teachers, community leaders, and local government representatives. Separate FGDs were conducted with young women and men. To stimulate discussion, a variety of interactive exercises were done during FGDs. All interviews and FGDs were transcribed and translated into English.

Non-participatory classroom observations of CSE lessons were conducted once in all four schools, to embed and triangulate findings from interviews and FGDs. Notes of classroom observations were taken by the observer and translated to English. Classroom observations were particularly geared to identifying recurring roles of teachers, and aspects of CSE that they emphasised during lessons.

In total, 56 participants took part in this study. The sample included 12 teachers, five members of parent-teacher-student associations, six parents, four directors, 21 young people (14–18 years), four community leaders, and four local government representatives (see Table 1). Participants were selected based on key characteristics such as teaching/participating in CSE and their gender, and their availability. At the start of each interview and FGD, participants were informed about the nature and purpose of the research, guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality in research data management and outputs, and informed of their rights to stop, refuse, or withdraw from participation. Only after it was clear participants understood this and gave consent, did data collection proceed.

Content analysis of the data was done in a systematic matter based on a pre-defined code list using Atlas.ti. Pre-defined codes included ‘conceptualising CSE’, ‘conceptualising gender-based violence’, ‘roles and responsibilities of CSE teachers’, ‘occasions where teachers address gender-based violence’, and ‘gender specific actions/language used’. During analysis, further codes were developed where relevant, that is, when new themes seemed to occur. For instance, preliminary analysis showed that participants emphasised the notion of ‘speaking openly about sexuality’. ‘Speaking openly about sexuality’ was therefore developed as an additional code to further scrutinise how this affected teacher enactment of CSE. Finally, summaries of codes were systematically analysed and

Table 1. Overview of participants.

	School1	School2	School3	School4	Community	N = 56 (19 female, 37 male)
Young men			7 male (1 FGD)	8 male (1 FGD)		15 male
Young women			6 female (1 FGD)			6 female
CSE teachers ^a	2	4	2	4 (1 FGD)		12 (4 female, 8 male)
Director ^b	1	1	1	1		4 (1 female, 3 male)
PTSA-members	2 male	1 male		1 male 1 female		5 (1 female, 4 male)
Parent(s)	1 female 1 male	1 female 1 male	2 female			6 (4 female, 2 male)
Community leaders					4 male (1 FGD)	4 male
Local government representatives					3 female 1 male (1 FGD)	4 (3 female, 1 male)

^aGender of CSE teachers per school has been removed in overview to ensure confidentiality.

^bGender of directors per school has been removed in overview to ensure confidentiality.

compared between categories of respondents and schools to identify similarities or differences, and the factors that helped explain similarities and differences. Analysis was thus geared towards identifying recurring themes that were central to teacher enactment of CSE. Initial findings of this study were validated with a selection of participants in a workshop in Ethiopia in December 2017, which confirmed and sharpened the findings of the study.

5. Findings

5.1. Teacher enactment of CSE

We now turn to a discussion of the roles and responsibilities of CSE teachers in enacting CSE and addressing gender-based violence. Themes that were central to these questions are teachers as advisers, teachers' socio-cultural roles, paying special attention to girls, and addressing gender-based violence. In discussing these themes, we present our main findings on both participants' interpretations of the CSE policy, as well as teachers' enactments of it, as they are closely interlinked.

Before presenting these key findings, it is first important to highlight how participants conceptualised CSE, as this is likely to inform teachers' enactment. Notably, almost all participants spoke favourably of CSE, despite its controversial nature in the community and country. Participants found CSE important for multiple reasons, including a perceived lack of knowledge about SRH among young people, the peer pressure they were seen to experience, young peoples' lack of discipline, lack of educational opportunities for young women, and poverty. In similar vein, when asked how they would define CSE, participants stressed the importance of increased knowledge about SRH, and especially 'scientific' knowledge. Additionally, participants described the programme as 'life-saving' in that it protected students from negative SRH outcomes, such as sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancy. They further emphasised that the participatory teaching and learning methods that characterised the programme helped students to focus, ensuring students became more 'disciplined' ultimately leading to better education outcomes. Participants thus emphasised the protective elements and positive health and education outcomes of the initiative.

5.1.1. Teachers as advisers

When asked about perceptions regarding the roles and responsibilities of CSE, teachers, young people, their parents, and community members primarily highlighted the importance of teachers as advisers. CSE, these participants explained, served as an entry point for teachers to encourage students to become citizens who show 'good moral behaviour'. As young women indicated during an FGD:

Interviewer: What is the role of teachers in solving the above-mentioned challenges [SRH challenges faced by young people in the community]? How can they help you all?

Participant5: If a boy falls in love, the teacher should advise him that it is wrong timing.

Participant6: The teacher has to teach the community about female genital mutilation as it is harmful traditional practice.

Participant2: If a girl runs away with a boy, teachers should advise her and interfere to bring her back to school. (D18, school3, FGD with young women)

Young men similarly responded that they viewed the main responsibilities of teachers in terms of advising students about ‘good’ behaviour and ‘appropriate’ future choices. Observation in classrooms confirmed these findings – CSE teachers offering students concrete advice about ‘good behaviour’ and staying on ‘the right track’. Emphasis on encouraging ‘good behaviour’ was also revealed by drawings put up on classroom walls, which depicted students showing ‘bad behaviour’ (for example, watching films) and ‘good behaviour’ (studying together). In many cases, teachers’ pieces of advice were recommendations to abstain from sex and romantic relationships, so that young people can focus on their education. Teachers’ strong emphasis on abstinence might be seen as in conflict with the ‘comprehensive’ nature of CSE (see Miedema, Le Mat, and Hague, [under review](#)). However, teachers in fact prioritised their advice to abstain as a form of re-contextualisation – based on their interpretations of the policy objectives and the view that a central goal of CSE was to save lives and create morally upstanding citizens.

5.1.2. Socio-cultural roles and responsibilities

Participants often emphasised the socio-cultural roles and responsibilities of CSE teachers. Noteworthy were the frequent references by students, teachers, and community members to CSE teachers having to be ‘free from culture’. This ‘freedom’ seemed to refer to the ability to speak openly about sexuality:

Young man: The good [CSE] teacher should be free from cultural view, he should normally teach his students based on science (...)

Interviewer: What does it mean, being free from culture?

Young man: It is to say a teacher of sexuality education should be free from shyness and so on. (D1, school4, FGD with young men)

I think this problem [to not speak openly about reproductive health] ... culture, the society’s culture. [CSE] is a rich mission to minimise this. (D2, school4, FGD with teachers, participant5, male)

These quotes reveal that CSE teachers were typically seen playing important roles to ‘correct’ or ‘minimise’ a culture of shyness about SRH-related issues, with ‘science’ playing an important role in achieving this goal. Ethiopian ‘culture’ thus appeared to be associated with shame regarding, and silence around, SRH issues. In light of global guidelines on CSE, which construct CSE as a universal and progressive policy but one that might not be supported by local communities, implying ‘cultural’ reasons, participants adopted similar language and positioned teachers as possible mediators between the ‘global progressive’ and their ‘local culture’ (see also Roodsaz 2018).

Parents, teachers, and students advocated for an open culture in which body parts are named and mentioned, and students are encouraged to speak confidently about bodily changes and reproductive health. In interviews, some teachers emphasised that CSE is different from other classes and that the CSE classroom is a designated space to openly speak about sexuality. They highlighted that the participatory approaches were particularly useful to facilitate openness. Teachers also believed this openness would lead to

better health and educational outcomes. Classroom observations revealed that CSE teachers explicitly encouraged students to speak and participate, repeatedly stating that ‘nature is not shame’. The importance of speaking openly about sexuality was also apparent in CSE classrooms, where posters made by students included drawings of bodily changes, the difference between male and female body parts, and, in some cases, displays of various contraceptive methods.

5.1.3. *Paying ‘special attention to girls’*

Teachers and parents stated that CSE teachers should pay ‘special attention to girls’. However, it was not always clear what this special attention should look like in practice, neither from participant narratives nor from the training or guidelines CSE teachers had received. In fact, giving ‘special attention to girls’ could mean a range of things. For instance, for many teachers, it entailed particularly advising young women not to enter into sexual relationships. Yet, another teacher, who felt personally changed by the training he received for teaching CSE, challenged existing preconceptions about female menstruation in his class:

When we see menstruation “Xurii laguu” [literally translated: dirty blood] it is not dirty as its name indicates. Period is a clean blood that symbolises that the girl is healthy. So girls should not be intimidated during their period. You have to be proud. (Observation in school3)

At the same time, in another school in a similar lesson on body change and menstruation, teachers emphasised the importance of female hygiene in ways that could be read as potentially entrenching shame. In an FGD, teachers emphasised that the school was facing female drop out due to lack of sanitary pads and washing facilities for girls in the school. Both the school director and members of parent-teacher-student associations confirmed that female drop out due to menstruation was a problem the school faced, and mentioned that the school ran a second girls’ club to encourage menstrual hygiene. The work of Sommer et al. (2015) is salient in this regard – data on the relationship between schooling and menstruation (which were gathered in the same region as data for the present study) indicated that girls believed that bathing during menstruation exacerbated the menstrual flow. Girls taking part in Somner et al.’s study explained that, in order to stem the flow, they bathed less (Sommer et al. 2015). This contextual detail may help explain – the seemingly insensitive – remarks made by another (male) CSE teacher regarding menstruation:

We don’t have to feel shy when we mention vagina or penis just like nose and eye. All are parts of our body. Above all, our body should be taken care of. Sanitation is important. Especially girls, you have to WASH [with emphasis] your vagina. You have to wash! During menstrual season sanitation is very important for girls. Vagina is very sensitive to sanitation. (Observation in school4)

Many girls were visibly uncomfortable when the teacher instructed them thus, averting their eyes to the ground and clasping their hands to their mouths. This reaction stands in stark contrast with the classroom observation of the earlier described scenario in school3, where young women and young men continued to ask questions about male and female body change and sexual development. However, the teacher’s approach in school4 may have been influenced by the problems the school was facing in terms of female

absenteeism and dropout due to menstruation, as well as the messages of the menstrual hygiene programme (taught by the same teachers). While seeming quite insensitive, the instruction may thus have been an attempt to address the belief among many girls about menstrual flows and washing. These examples thus reveal the interactive nature of policy enactment, influenced by personal motivations, interpretations of giving ‘special attention to girls’ (or arguably, UNESCO (2015a) plea for gender bias-free teaching), and school context.

Finally, teachers’ roles of creating an environment to speak openly about sexuality also extended to the wider community. A recurring theme throughout the interviews was the importance of the parents day event that teachers organised after completion of the CSE lessons. Teachers and students used this day to generate discussion in the community about SRH, presenting student-made posters that highlighted what students had learned in CSE and verbal student testimonies how the initiative had changed their behaviour for the better. Indeed, the day reportedly helped parents to understand and accept CSE-related contents. One parent who reported having initially been sceptical about CSE indicated that taking part in the parent day had led to a change of mind:

Interviewer: What is the bad thing (...) that you were afraid of?

Parent: For example, boys and girls study together [in CSE] and when they are told about the issues apart from the academic issues, we thought they would go astray as some of the lessons are sexuality related.

Interviewer: So what changed your mind?

Parent: I heard about the programme in the exhibition event of students at parent gathering at the end of the academic year and understood it well. (...) There were topics related with abduction and HIV/AIDS prevention as well as sexual abuses in the exhibition by the students. (D10, school2, parent2, female)

These data illustrate that teachers’ enactment extended beyond the CSE classroom and even beyond the school, teachers advocating for CSE and young people’s SRH more broadly in their communities.

5.1.4. Addressing gender-based violence

In an FGD with young women, participants suggested that CSE teachers should take action in case violence occurred:

Participant 1: If a girl is abducted, teachers should interfere and bring the guy to the legal system. (D18, school3, FGD with young women)

Teachers indeed recalled occasions where they had interfered when there were signs of early marriage or abduction:

As the member of the community also, teachers play role in making people aware on what is good and what is wrong. And again if there are problems with students, we support them as much as we can, for example, like early marriage, abduction, etc., by communicating with police on conditions that students reported to us. (D20, school2, teacher3, male)

Students and teachers considered CSE teachers to be key players in resolving such family disputes, because of their knowledge of SRH as well as their closeness to students, the latter being seen in relation to the participatory nature of CSE lessons.

One teacher felt particularly passionate about addressing gender-based violence in schools and saw CSE as a valuable means in such efforts. During the interview, this teacher spoke of her own experiences with abuse of female students by teachers. She described sharing her experiences with her students as a means to warn them not to let teachers abuse them, and appreciated the practical advice included in CSE curriculum, such as carrying perfume to spray in the eyes of a potential attacker. However, participants discussed gender-based violence typically as something ‘outside’ the education system, that is, as occurring in families and communities, and thus intervention within the school compounds remained limited (as reported in other studies as well, see, e.g. Altinyelken and Le Mat 2018).

Students and teachers mentioned that creating an open environment in CSE classrooms helped students to report cases of abuse to teachers. Participants saw important networking roles for CSE teachers who could intervene in case of gender-based violence by reaching out to parent-teacher-student associations, local NGOs, and/or relevant local government bodies. However, some teachers reported that the community blamed them for interfering in family affairs. Indeed, it remained unclear to what extent in practice CSE teacher intervention was likely or how safe it might be for teachers to intervene in the first place. Other research suggests that in practice, such efforts may be limited due to low teacher status and limited support from school management (see Vanner 2017), or high social control (Bhana 2015; Maes et al. 2015; Mitchell 2017).

5.2. Factors influencing teacher enactment

To understand the variation in teacher enactment, we now turn to a discussion of the factors that further influenced CSE teacher enactment. The data suggest that teachers’ personal characteristics, beliefs, and motivations influenced policy enactment, as well as school context, socio-economic factors, and relations with the community.

5.2.1. Personal characteristics, beliefs, and motivations

Participant accounts suggest that teachers’ enactment depended largely on teachers’ level of self-confidence and their knowledge about SRH. Teachers indicated that it took ‘courage’ to teach about CSE, given its controversial nature within the community. In the words of one parent:

I don’t believe that any teacher can teach sexuality education. SRH by itself is very sensitive issue that needs special attention; so it needs special training, special knowledge which is directly related to SRH and it must be integrated with personal characteristics of the teacher. If the teacher behaves in a bad way and talk about reproductive health, nobody can accept them because students see his or her action. It needs a good character in the school and in their personal life out of the school and the teacher should be a role model for his students.
(D7, school1, parent1, male)

Indeed, teachers felt it was important to be a role model to their students and the wider community, not in the least because they also faced resistance from them. Some

teachers talked about their concerns regarding the possibility that the community would hold them accountable for possible lack of behavioural change of CSE students, spoke of their experiences of being called ‘bad names’, and their fear of social exclusion. While one local government participant stressed exclusion was a particular risk faced by female CSE teachers, when asked, most teachers – male and female – did not make a gender distinction when reflecting on possible challenges related to teaching CSE. Instead, teachers consistently referred to the importance of self-confidence and ‘good behaviour’.

Noteworthy were teachers’ scarce references to religion or their own beliefs in connection with their approach to teaching CSE. That said, teachers did allude to ‘culture’, typically highlighting that the training they have received for teaching CSE has shifted their views as to what they considered ‘appropriate’ SRH-related content for young people. The following extract is illustrative in this regard:

First of all, the training changed my behaviour, before that I have no confidence to discuss about this issue, because of the culture I came through. But now I discuss freely with my children and I teach my neighbours about discussing freely with young children about sexuality issues, and I see the change. (D19, school2, teacher2, female)

Because of their change in behaviour and beliefs, teachers often positioned themselves as ‘culturally progressive’, which in the main referred to speaking openly about sexuality (c. f. Roodsaz 2018). However, teachers felt this openness did not have to alter their advice to students to abstain – an advice that aligns best with most CSE teachers’ own beliefs as to keeping young people on ‘the right track’. As one teacher observed during the validation workshop:

As [teachers] we believe that giving a free choice to these very young children is dangerous. SRH is sensitive issue that determines the future life of the youth. So as a teacher, we need to show them the right way. Just discussing the options and leaving the choice to them is dangerous because they are kids who do not know what is right and wrong (Validation workshop, teacher)

Teachers’ reasons for advising young people to abstain thus came from a sense of care and responsibility so as to avoid that young people, possibly young women in particular, would have to drop out of education due to, for instance, unplanned pregnancy.

Finally, teachers’ motivations to teach the programme appeared to be a crucial factor shaping their enactment of CSE. When asked why they decided to teach CSE, almost all CSE teachers reported that the school board had selected them to teach the programme. Selection criteria often included English language skills (in some schools, the CSE curriculum is taught in English), knowledge of biology, and having good rapport with young people. Interestingly, almost all teachers said they felt committed to teaching CSE once they were selected for it, particularly in view of their opportunities to ‘save lives’ of young people, and create good citizens.

5.2.2. School context

Regarding school context, CSE teachers highlighted that their enactment of CSE was largely influenced by the support that they received from school management and other available structures within the schools. Some teachers complained that school

management dedicated their resources to regular classes (so as to prioritise results on national exams) thereby side-lining CSE, which affected CSE teachers' motivation and means to teach CSE:

According to me, the main problem is that the school administration lacks interest to facilitate [CSE] like that of regular programmes. They have no interest to facilitate these issues. (D2, school4, FGD with teachers, teacher3, male)

In the same school, the school director reported that the reason the school started with the CSE programme was because they were offered computers in exchange (in this school, part of the CSE curriculum was computer-based):

Interviewer: Why was the school interested to adopt the programme?

Director: It was the support of [the NGO] to introduce technology like computer use, and Internet to the students to enable them reach the world. (D6, school4, director)

The extract highlights the director's rationale for adopting the CSE programme, that is, in so doing, the school could facilitate student access to computers and Internet, and thereby (further) expand students' horizons. The director also reported that the school lacked resources to facilitate the programme to the extent that he wished to. In this case, the director thus prioritised concerns that differed from those of CSE teachers.

The data also show that in schools where supportive structures such as health facilities, guidance and counselling, school psychologist, or school rules and regulations against gender-based violence were absent, CSE teachers seemed to act as the main focal points for dealing with cases of gender-based violence. Observations in schoolyards revealed the prevalence of the use of corporal punishment in at least two of the four schools. While no teachers mentioned corporal punishment as an issue affecting their own enactment of CSE, it is likely to influence the overall strategy of the school and ways young people learn about violence, potentially undermining what they learned during CSE lessons.

5.2.3. Socio-economic environment

Poverty was a main concern for the majority of students in the four schools. CSE teachers spoke of the economic support they offered students, ranging from helping students to purchase school stationery to helping them set up small businesses. Students reportedly felt more closely connected to their CSE teacher than their regular teachers and were thus also seen to more quickly make an appeal to their CSE teacher. Potentially, CSE teachers' association with NGOs and foreign aid also contributed to students more frequently seeking financial support from them.

CSE teachers expressed concern that poor economic status increased the vulnerability of young women to transactional sex and young men to exploitation—however, they were limited in providing the economic assistance these students needed. Participants particularly highlighted that the poorest students often were not able to attend extra-curricular classes due to their having to work outside of school hours. Some suggested CSE should be integrated in the standard curriculum so as to reach the entire student population. Teachers had witnessed NGO-initiated extra-curricular programmes phased

out after a certain period of time in other schools, leading them to be doubtful as to the programme's sustainability. In addition, the fact that CSE teachers did not receive remuneration for their efforts seemed to frustrate many teachers, and made them feel unable to teach CSE in what they felt was a satisfactory manner.

5.2.4. *Relations with the community*

As indicated earlier, almost all participants referred to community resistance and suspicion against the idea of providing education on sexuality. Particularly parents of CSE students were afraid that the school and the foreign NGO providing CSE were encouraging young people to start (sexual) relationships:

[When volunteers and the local NGO] offered training, the team had equal number of female and male members; and [they] selected 50 male and 50 female students. Unknowingly, [the local community] perceived [the training activity] as couple making; the members of parent-teacher-student associations also didn't like the pairing. As the education was about sexuality, it didn't promote good spirit among the local community. (D11, school4, member of parent-teacher-student association1, male)

In addition to concerns about the sexuality-related content of CSE, teachers' challenges in dealing with resistance largely related to their professional status. Some teachers indicated that students or parents did not always accept teachers' authority, and CSE teachers were vulnerable to accusations of teaching 'immoral lessons.' One local government representative observed:

In [school 3] when the teacher mentioned SRH topics like body parts, safe sex, STI, menstruation ... the students were gossiping that their teacher is teaching them "balage" [out of the norm, rude] lesson. The students didn't like it at all. Then the teacher and even the advisory committee heard about it. But the teacher was strong enough to win this by himself. He explained that this is an important lesson that can improve the students' attitude and behaviour. Now the students like the CSE. (D23, FGD with local government representatives)

As the extract above illustrates, 'gossip' was experienced as a potential threat to the success of CSE initiatives. Some teachers evaluated themselves as 'good' CSE teachers if they were able to teach the curriculum as it was set out, despite community resistance or their own (initial) concerns. The emphasis placed on dealing with resistance reveals that teaching CSE was not simply a matter of implementation or facilitation, but a continuous negotiation between individuals' beliefs, community, curriculum, and the broader socio-economic context.

6. Conclusions

CSE developers of the programme studied described teachers' roles as 'facilitators.' However, as the analysis of data has shown, teachers did not merely 'facilitate' CSE in schools, but took up a range of additional roles and responsibilities both in their schools and communities. These roles ranged from advising young people, to networking with community members, and advocating for CSE in the school and community.

While CSE is often framed as playing important roles to address gender-based violence, most CSE teachers did not mention addressing gender-based violence as

a priority unless prompted. Nevertheless, CSE teachers, and especially their students, did regard it to be the CSE teacher's responsibility to intervene in cases of early marriage or abduction, although their space to do so was limited because of their ambivalent relations with the community and limited school supportive structures (Bhana 2015; Maes et al. 2015; Vanner 2017).

As the analysis has shown, enactment of CSE was the outcome of a continuous mediation between teachers beliefs, curriculum text, community and school context, and socio-economic concerns. Indeed, with regard to the latter issue, most references to teacher interventions were in response to socio-economic needs of student populations. Furthermore, material conditions and school supportive structures were important factors that influenced re-contextualisation of the policy in schools, particularly affecting the time teachers could spend on teaching CSE, including on addressing gender-based violence, and the priority the programme would benefit from.

At the same time, teachers navigated sensitive terrain which often conflicted with community values. Re-contextualisation of the policy can be understood by CSE teachers' strategies to overcome community resistance. For instance, resistance to CSE was often related to the idea of speaking about sexuality in mixed-sex classrooms to unmarried young people. In response to this resistance, when advocating for the programme, teachers emphasised the benefits of CSE for young people, such as increased self-confidence, an increase in platonic friendships between young men and women, and improved knowledge and ability to talk about sexual health. In addition, teachers' focus on health and educational outcomes, drawing on notions of child protection, 'good morals', and mitigation of the more controversial idea of 'sexuality' education, appears to be a direct response to the priorities teachers identified in the community. Not only did teachers actively re-contextualise CSE to fit what they identified as local values and priorities, in turn, CSE policies also appeared to mould teachers into taking up advocacy roles. That is, teachers presented these strategies as ways to advocate for CSE, even if their strategies could at times be considered counter-productive to the comprehensive nature of CSE – underpinning CSE are notions of, for example, promoting young people's agency, which received partial attention in the re-contextualised version focused on instilling good morals. Teachers thus tailored contents to community values, thereby playing their part in the process of policy re-contextualisation.

While global guidelines give direction in terms of content knowledge, the ways teachers should deal with gender relations and address gender-based violence receive less attention. It was exactly in these areas where teachers' own interpretations of the policy, their personal experiences, and school context, affected the emphases they applied in their CSE classes: some teachers took CSE as an opportunity to give practical advice to girls on how to avoid sexual abuse, some actively challenged gendered prejudices around menarche, whereas others seemed to entrench these. Strikingly, teachers hardly reflected on how their own positions affected their enactment of CSE. As confirmed in other studies, teacher reflexivity and positionality are factors affecting teacher enactment of policies aimed at addressing gender-based violence (Ollis 2014; Altinyelken and Le Mat 2018). However, such reflexivity is unlikely to be sufficient to address gender-based violence in and of itself but needs to be supported by wider school, community, and legal structures (Bhana 2015).

There is no unidirectional way of implementing a new policy. Instead, enactment is an ongoing process of reflection, interpretation, and mediation in which teachers play central roles (Altinyelken 2011b; Ball, Maguire, and Braun 2012; Pot 2018). Future education policies and programmes should thus pay attention to ways to strengthen teachers' positions in and outside schools, and reflexivity in teacher professional development. Such attention should have particular application to teachers' roles in addressing gender-based violence, as this remains a vague if not neglected agenda in schools, education policies, and programmes. Finally, teachers are important resources when trying to understand the dynamics shaping re-contextualisation of CSE policy at the level of schools and communities. Local, national and international actors should make more efforts to include teachers' views, concerns, and daily realities, in the development of education agendas, particularly in view of the multiple demands faced by teachers and the under-resourced settings in which many operate.

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ORCID

Marielle L. J. Le Mat  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8050-7834>

Esther A. J. Miedema  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5654-0987>

Hülya Kosar-Altinyelken  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2178-0862>

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