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### Beyond the facts

*Addressing gender-based violence through comprehensive sexuality education in schools in Ethiopia*

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#### Publication date

2020

#### Document Version

Other version

#### License

Other

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#### Citation for published version (APA):

Le Mat, M. L. J. (2020). *Beyond the facts: Addressing gender-based violence through comprehensive sexuality education in schools in Ethiopia*.

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## CHAPTER 4. CSE TEACHERS' ENACTMENT AND RE-CONTEXTUALIZATION OF CSE POLICY IN SCHOOLS

This chapter is a pre-print version of: Le Mat, M.L.J., Miedema, E.A.J., Aniley, Siyane A., & Kosar-Altinyelken, H. (2019). Moulding the teacher: factors shaping teacher enactment of comprehensive sexuality education policy in Ethiopia. *Compare: A journal of comparative and international education*, 1-19. The Version of Record of this manuscript has been published on 1 November 2019 and is available in *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* by Taylor and Francis. DOI: 10.1080/03057925.2019.1682967.

### 4.1 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 et al., 2014; Parkes, Heslop, Johnson Ross, et al., 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 et al., 2014; Parkes, 2016). CSE is regarded as an important means to promote young people's SRHR, a goal that is generally seen as including addressing gender-based violence and enhancing gender relations more broadly. Despite controversies surrounding CSE in many parts around the world (Miedema et al., under review), the subject is increasingly being integrated into national curricula (UNESCO, 2015a), or taught in extra-curricular classes, as is the case in Ethiopia.

At the level of the school, CSE teachers play crucial roles in enacting CSE policy. Research has shown that teachers, and particularly sexuality education teachers, 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 also do more harm than good by 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). However, few studies have focused on teachers' perspectives and reasons for adapting CSE.

Therefore, in this paper, we aim to improve understanding of the ways in which teachers enact and re-contextualize CSE policy, and their reasons for doing so. Focusing on

teacher enactment includes attention to conceptual interpretations of the policy, which, in the case of CSE, also relates to issues of the controversial nature of the policy and teachers' views on its appropriateness. We focus on the dynamic interplay between teachers' beliefs and practices, and their understandings of the CSE-related policy and programmes, 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 policy and CSE teachers' responsibilities in addressing sexual and 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 to address 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 sexual and 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.

## 4.2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 4.2.1 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, 2018a). CSE is 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, 2015a). However, the integration of CSE features in national curricula and policies does not always mean it is delivered as intended at the level of schools (UNESCO, 2015a). 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 (Vanwesenbeek et al., 2016), or discuss only on 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-contextualize CSE policy at school level and include a broad range of factors that might influence such enactment.

Various international organisations have developed global guidelines for CSE teachers, with a view to – in the case of UNESCO (2015b), for example – ‘equip teachers with the basic knowledge and skills necessary to deliver effective sexuality education in the classroom’ (p.12). The document lists core competencies for CSE teachers, and offers a detailed outline of essential vocabulary, content knowledge and examples of learning activities to be used by CSE teachers. 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 people’s SRH. The *It’s All One* guidelines provide teaching tips and detail examples of activities CSE teachers can organise. Additionally, both sets of guidelines for teachers (International Sexuality and HIV Curriculum Working Group, 2009; UNESCO, 2015b) provide definitions of terms such as gender roles, gender norms, gender identity and gender-based violence. Actual directions on *how* teachers can address gender-based violence remain vague, however. For example, the *‘It’s All One’* guidelines speak of teachers providing a safe learning environment and offering the possibility of referring 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 reflection exercises for teachers, for instance, on how gender norms influence their teaching. However, in the same section the guidelines urge teachers to teach ‘sexuality education free from gender biases’ because this ‘is critical so as not to inadvertently reinforce harmful gender norms’ (UNESCO, 2015b, p.211). Just how such gender bias-free teaching is to be done is not expanded on and thus remains open for interpretation. The guidelines also state that CSE can prevent gender-based violence, but do not provide any detail as to what CSE teachers’ roles are in doing so.

Interestingly, UNESCO guidelines mention the imperative to create ‘local’ support for the global CSE policy. The guidelines emphasise the importance of attention to cultural relevance in creating such local support: ‘The Guidance stresses 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’ (UNESCOa, 2018, p. 84). The *It’s All One* guidelines also emphasise cultural dynamics, but state that the guidelines can be ‘used in many cultures. It applies universal principles to the varied cultural and social circumstances in which people live’ (International Sexuality and HIV Curriculum Working Group, 2009, p.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, Altinyelken, Bos, and Volman, 2019; Miedema, 2018; Roodsaz, 2018).

Against this backdrop, CSE teachers have often been criticised or seen as an obstacle to CSE enactment because they modify CSE content when teaching, skip, or shorten 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, Flisher, Mathews, Mukoma, and Jansen, 2009; DePalma and Francis, 2014; Helleve, Flisher, Onya, Mukoma, and Klepp, 2009; Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2016). For instance, studies conducted in South Africa and Uganda indicate that teachers were proponents of abstinence, as a result struggled to teach young people about condom use (Ahmed et al., 2009; De Haas and Hutter, 2018). Other 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 DePalma and Francis, 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 et al., 2005). However, not only teachers’ own beliefs influence their teaching of sexuality education, but socio-economic environment, school environment, and available materials also affect enactment (Ahmed et al., 2009). Furthermore, 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).

#### 4.2.2 TEACHER ENACTMENT AND POLICY RE-CONTEXTUALIZATION

Global education policies have often been found to be re-contextualized 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 et al., 2018). Central to understanding re-contextualization of global policies at school, is teacher enactment. Enactment refers to the dynamic ways policies are made and remade at school. The notion of ‘enactment’ highlights the interactive nature of policy re-contextualization, which is affected by conceptual interpretations of the policy, the importance attached to it, contextual priorities, and how the policy is used, and negotiated (Ball et al., 2012; Parkes, 2016). In a similar vein, Unterhalter and North (2017) speak of the ‘middle space’ between policy and its realisation, that is, the institutions, intentions, opportunities, relationships, and enactments that each shape policy directions differently. These relationships and interactions give meaning to and (re-)contextualize policy text and concepts and may be situated within as well as beyond the

school context. Against this backdrop, we understand teacher enactment of CSE, and teachers' possible modification of, and/or resistance to, CSE, as a reaction to, and an interaction with, policy ideas advocated by international organisations.

Studies of global education policy re-contextualization have revealed that multiple factors affect enactment at school level. These factors can include school history, location, performance, and its population largely influence how a policy change is interpreted and taken up (Ball et al., 2012). Feasibility of effecting a policy change also varies per teacher, and is influenced by, among other factors, how teachers interpret the policy change (Rogan 2007), and the extent to which they relate to it. For example, where some teachers may act as advocates and entrepreneurs to successfully make the policy change work, others may act as critics depending on their own position, beliefs, and interpretation of the policy (Ball et al., 2012; Altinyelken, 2011b). Furthermore, teachers' positions and roles in enacting the policy may also be affected by their relationships and status within the school and community (Barrett, 2005; Unterhalter and North, 2017). For instance, teachers in Tanzania spoke of seeing their roles as much more than being a schoolteacher 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, 2012a; 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 CSE teachers' enactment, 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 (Assié-Lumumba, 2012). The influence of the international development actors in schools has also had its effect on teachers. For instance, Pot (2018) describes how teachers in Malawi act as 'development brokers', advocating messages from NGOs to wider communities. Pot (2018) revealed that selected teachers became important resources for NGOs and enjoyed 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 teachers to feel alienated from their communities (Barrett, 2005). Such dynamics may thus affect policy enactment – possibly leading to more responsibilities, accountability, or vulnerability of teachers. In the case of CSE, the dynamics of emerging global CSE policies and its adoption in Ethiopia, combined with the influence of (international) NGOs, may thus influence the ways in which teachers' roles and responsibilities are enacted and perceived by themselves, their students, community, NGOs and national policy.

### 4.3 CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

The gender gap in enrolment rates in primary and secondary schools is closing in Ethiopia (GPI was 0.90 and 0.91 respectively in 2017 (MoE, 2017); in the region of study, Oromia, the Index was 0.87 and 0.81 respectively). At the same time, the share of female teachers in schools was only 37% for primary schools and 15% for secondary schools in 2013 (UN Women, 2014). While policies pay increasing attention to young women's retention in schools, and attracting female teachers, gender inequalities remain, including gender-based violence (Altinyelken and Le Mat, 2018; Parkes et al., 2017).

Both the MoH and MoE of Ethiopia have signed the regional Ministerial Commitment on CSE and SRH 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. That CSE may also contribute to positive gender relations, and as such address gender-based violence, is considered an important benefit of the programme according to the MoH policy, and CSE is included in Ethiopia's National Adolescent and Youth Health Strategy (2016-2020) (MoH). The national MoE promotes 'life skills and sex education' – though omitting the 'comprehensive' central to CSE programmes. It is important to note here that CSE is highly controversial in Ethiopia. The policy has been strongly resisted by some national actors for concerns related to cultural appropriateness – which seemed to mainly refer to the mentioning of homosexuality (see Le Mat et al., 2019). Indeed, the appropriateness of the policy in the Ethiopian context is a topic of debate, and international promotion of CSE is often seen as an imposition of Western values (Le Mat et al., 2019; see also Roodsaz, 2018). Part of the controversy is also related to the fact that CSE is taught in mixed-sex classrooms where sexuality is discussed not necessarily within the context of marriage. These concerns regarding CSE also became apparent during the present study. With this context in mind, CSE teachers are thus the central enactors of a highly controversial policy, and understanding their views and ways of re-contextualizing 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. CSE programmes are extra-curricular school activities in Ethiopia, largely supported by (international) NGOs, bilateral donors, and international organisations. 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 until now CSE has been embedded in an 'SRH' agenda in Ethiopia, where the final 'R' that stands for 'rights' is omitted from the global 'SRHR' agenda.

Over the past decade, national teacher training programmes in Ethiopia have been shortened, and increasingly criticised for poor quality, technocratic and managerial approaches to the teacher profession (Dahlström and Lemma, 2008; Tessema, 2007). At the

same time, teachers are increasingly held to account to communities. Parent-teacher-student associations, for example, may operate as platform for social control of teachers by the community, and vice versa (Mitchell, 2017). In communities, health extension workers serve as a governmental structure where households are monitored for health practices – a structure that was reportedly designed as a means to achieve ‘community empowerment’, but scholars have drawn attention to their possible use in terms of surveillance (Maes, Closser, Vorel, and Tesfaye, 2015).

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 two hours (though observations revealed that lessons took no longer than one hour). One lesson is fully dedicated to the topic gender-based violence. The programme is designed in Europe and contextualized by an Ethiopian NGO to the national socio-cultural and legal context. CSE programme developers conceive the role of teachers to ‘facilitate’ the programme, and not deeply engage with the content. School teachers receive an initial six to seven-day training from the implementing NGO about SRH, gender equality, 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 smaller villages. Over the recent years, growing unrest in Oromia region has affected the town where many are unemployed, especially youth. This unrest has also affected the CSE programme, as teachers mentioned they had to pause the programme for a certain period time, at some point even fearing the programme would completely discontinue.

## 4.4 METHODS

Between May and July 2017, semi-structured interviews and FGDs were conducted in combination with non-participant observation of CSE classes in four schools in and around one provincial town that all provided CSE. Interviews were held with CSE teachers, school directors, members of parent-teacher-student associations (PTSAs), 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. To stimulate discussion, a variety of interactive exercises were done during FGDs. FGDs were held with CSE students, CSE teachers, community leaders, and local government representatives. Separate



FGDs were conducted with young women and young men. All interviews and FGDs were transcribed and translated into English. Non-participatory classroom observations of CSE lessons were conducted once in all four schools that were part of this study, to embed and triangulate findings from interviews and FGDs. Notes of classroom observations were taken by the observant 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 participants included 12 teachers, five PTSA-members, six parents, four directors, 21 young people (three FGDs, 14-18 years), four community leaders, and four local government representatives (see Table 5 below). Participants were selected based on key characteristics such as teaching/participating in CSE and their gender, and also their time availability and interest to participate in the study. At the start of each interview, FGD, and observation session, 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, data collection proceeded.

Content analysis of the transcribed interviews and FGDs, and notes of the classroom observations 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 to allow new themes to occur. For instance, preliminary analysis showed that when speaking of CSE, gender-based violence, and teachers' responsibilities, 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 compared between categories of participants 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.

**TABLE 5. OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPANTS**

	School1	School2	School3	School4	Community	N=56 (19 female, 37 male)
<b>Young men</b>			7 males (1 FGD)	8 males (1 FGD)		15 males
<b>Young women</b>			6 females (1 FGD)			6 females
<b>CSE teachers<sup>12</sup></b>	2	4	2	4 (1 FGD)		12 (4 females, 8 males)
<b>Director<sup>13</sup></b>	1	1	1	1		4 (1 female, 3 males)
<b>PTSA-members</b>	2 males	1 male		1 male 1 female		5 (1 female, 4 males)
<b>Parent(s)</b>	1 female 1 male	1 female 1 male	2 females			6 (4 females, 2 males)
<b>Community leaders</b>					4 male (1 FGD)	4 males
<b>Local government representatives</b>					3 female 1 male (1 FGD)	4 (3 females, 1 male)

## 4.5. FINDINGS

### 4.5.1 TEACHER ENACTMENT OF CSE

We now turn to a discussion of how CSE teachers, students, and community members view the roles and responsibilities of CSE teachers to address gender-based violence, and how CSE teachers enact these roles and responsibilities. Before discussing how participants viewed teachers' main roles as enactors, however, it is first important to highlight how participants conceptualised CSE. Interestingly, almost all participants spoke favourably of CSE, despite its controversy in the community and country. Participants found CSE important in light of a perceived lack of knowledge about SRH, peer pressure and young

<sup>12</sup> Gender of CSE teachers per school has been removed in overview to ensure confidentiality.

<sup>13</sup> Gender of directors per school has been removed in overview to ensure confidentiality.

people's lack of discipline, lack of educational opportunities for young women, and poverty. Against this backdrop, 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 STIs 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. CSE teachers thus emphasised the protective elements and positive health and education outcomes of the initiative (see also Miedema et al., 2017).

#### 4.5.1.1 TEACHERS AS ADVISERS

When asked about perceptions regarding the roles and responsibilities of CSE teachers, young people, their parents, community members and teachers primarily highlighted the importance of teachers as advisors. CSE, these participants explained, served as an entry point for teachers to encourage students to become citizens who show 'good moral behaviour'. The advising roles of CSE teachers also included that participants expected CSE teachers to encourage young people to focus on their education and abstain from sex and romantic relationships, while providing SRH knowledge. 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 men and women in the community]? How can they help you all?*

*Participant12: If a boy falls in love, the teacher should advise him that it is wrong timing.*

*Participant13: The teacher has to teach the community about female genital mutilation as it is harmful traditional practice.*

*Participant9: If a girl runs away with a boy, teachers should advise her and interfere to bring her back to school. [Town1, School3, Student12,13,9, female, FGD]*

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), and displayed the often recurring quote 'I can, but I won't, I decide'. In many cases, these advices translated to recommendations to abstain from sex. In so doing, CSE teachers emphasised the benefits to health and education outcomes of that advice. Teachers' strong emphasis on abstinence might be seen as in conflict with the

‘comprehensive’ nature of CSE (see Miedema et al., under review). However, teachers in fact prioritised this advice as a form of re-contextualization – based on their interpretations of the objectives of the policies as well as the identified priorities that CSE is used for, that is, saving lives and creating good moral citizens.

#### 4.5.1.2 SOCIO-CULTURAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Participants often emphasised the socio-cultural roles and responsibilities of CSE teachers. Interestingly, students, teachers, and community members suggested that CSE teachers should be ‘free from culture’. This seemed to refer to the ability to speak openly about sexuality, without the influence of ‘tradition’:

*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. [Town1, School4, Student, male, FGD)*

*I think this problem [to not speak openly about reproductive health] ... culture, the society’s culture. This [CSE programme] is a rich mission to minimise this. [Town1, School4, Teacher11, male, FGD)*

These quotes thus reveal that CSE teachers were typically seen playing important roles as to ‘correct’ or ‘minimise’ a culture of silence and shame. Ethiopian culture as such was associated with silence about sexuality and reproductive health issues, and sex as shameful. Interestingly, seen in light of the narratives of global guidelines on CSE, which construct CSE as a global and progressive policy possibly unsupported by communities for 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 body change and reproductive health. They believed this openness would lead to better health and education outcomes. Importance of speaking openly about sexuality also reflected in CSE classrooms, where posters made by students decorated classroom walls. Posters included drawings of body change, the difference between male and female body parts, written advice about health and safety, and in some cases displays of various contraceptive methods. In addition, classroom observations revealed that CSE teachers explicitly encouraged students to speak and participate and repeated that ‘nature is not shame’. 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.

#### 4.5.1.3 PAYING ‘SPECIAL ATTENTION TO GIRLS’

It is worth noting that teachers and parents stated that CSE teachers should pay ‘special attention to girls’. Yet, it was not always clear what this meant or should look like in practice, neither from our participants’ perspectives, nor from the training or guidelines CSE teachers had received. Hence, giving ‘special attention to girls’ could mean a range of things in practice, yet primarily seemed to mean teachers advised young women in particular not to enter into sexual relationships. One 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. [Town1, 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 with these teachers, they emphasised that the school was facing female drop out due to lack of sanitary pads and washing facilities for young women in the school. Both the school director and PTSA-members confirmed that female drop out due to menstruation is a problem the school faces and mentioned that the school runs a second girls’ club to encourage menstrual hygiene. In their study on the relation between schooling and menstruation in the same region, Sommer and colleagues (2015) highlighted the belief among girls that bathing during menstruation exacerbates the menstrual flow. Girls explained that, for this reason, they bathed less to stem the flow (Sommer et al., 2015). This contextual detail is crucial when interpreting the following – seemingly insensitive – remarks made by another (male) CSE teacher:

*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. [Town1, Observation in School4]*

Many young women were visibly uncomfortable when the teacher instructed them thus, averting their eyes to the ground and claspng 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 logic of the teacher in school4

may have been influenced by the problem the school is facing with female dropout due to menstruation and the simultaneous menstrual hygiene programme (taught by the same teachers). Moreover, while seeming quite insensitive, the instruction may have been an attempt to address the belief among many young women about flows and washing (discussed above). These examples thus reveal the interactive nature of policy enactment, influenced by personal motivations, interpretations of giving ‘special attention to girls’ (or arguably, UNESCO’s (2015b) urge for gender bias-free teaching), as well as school context (see also next section).

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 parent’s day event that teachers organised after each CSE lesson sequence. Teachers and students used this day to generate discussion in the community about SRH, presenting student-made posters that highlighted what students have learned in CSE and verbal student testimonies how it changed their behaviour for the better. Indeed, it helped parents to better understand the contents of CSE and accept the programme. One parent who at first was sceptical about CSE reported that taking part in the parent day 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. [Town1, School2, Parent4, female]*

Hence, teachers’ roles and enactment extend beyond the CSE classroom and even beyond the school, where they act as advocates for CSE and SRH more broadly in their communities.

#### 4.5.1.4 ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

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

*Participant8: If a girl is abducted, teachers should interfere and bring the guy to the legal system. [Town1, School3, Student8, female, FGD]*

Teachers indeed recalled occasions where they 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 polices on conditions that students reported to us. [Town1, School2, Teacher5, 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 due to the participatory teaching methods of CSE. This also extended to the expectation of teachers to act as contact point for poor and orphaned youth as to find ways for these young people to be able to access education if their own funds did not meet the demands.

One teacher felt particularly passionate about addressing gender-based violence in schools and saw CSE as a means to do that, because of her own experiences with abuse of teachers as a female student. She described sharing her experiences with her students so as to warn them not to let other 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, i.e. 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 an open environment in CSE classrooms helped students to report cases of abuse to teachers. Participants found it particularly important that CSE teachers encourage young women to speak openly about sexuality, and to request her rights:

*It is the teacher’s role to create awareness (...) the teachers should work on the SRH club [CSE] to create knowledge and behavioural change among boys and girls. Especially they need to focus on the girls. Ever since a girl is 15, she starts to get the question for sexual intercourse. She needs the knowledge and skill to think about HIV, about her life priorities. [Town1, Community leaders, Participant4, male, FGD]*

Participants thus saw important networking roles for CSE teachers who could intervene in case of gender-based violence by reaching out to PTSAs, local NGOs, and 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, which may be limited due to low teacher status, limited support from school management (see Vanner, 2017), or in a context of high social control (Bhana, 2015; Maes et al., 2017; Mitchell, 2017).

#### 4.5.2 FACTORS INFLUENCING TEACHER ENACTMENT

To understand the variation in teacher enactment, we now turn to a discussion of the factors that influenced CSE teacher enactment. We differentiate between individual (personal) (section 5.2.1), school context (section 5.2.2), socio-economic (section 5.2.3) influence on CSE enactment, and the influence of relations with the community (section 5.2.4).

##### 4.5.2.1 INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

According to participants, individual factors that influence teachers' enactment depended on a large extent on the level of self-confidence and knowledge about SRH teachers have in teaching CSE. Teachers indicated it took courage to teach about CSE given its controversial nature within the community, combined with other favourable personal characteristics. 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. [Town1, 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. Indeed, some teachers feared the community would hold them accountable for lack of behavioural change of CSE students, experienced being called bad names, and feared social exclusion. One local government participant stressed exclusion was particularly the case for female CSE teachers, but most male and female teachers who were asked about gender differences instead highlighted that having self-confidence and good behaviour were more important characteristics to be accepted as a CSE teacher.

Noteworthy were the scarce references by teachers to religion or their own beliefs influencing the way they teach 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. In light of their changed views on 'culture', CSE teachers positioned themselves as CSE advocates, acting as 'cultural' or 'development brokers' in schools and the community (see also Pot, 2018):



*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.* [Town1, School2, Teacher4, female]

While teachers positioned themselves as ‘culturally progressive’, which in the main referred to speaking openly about sexuality (c.f. Roodsaz, 2018), teachers felt this did not have to alter their advice to students to abstain – an advice that aligns best with their most CSE teachers’ own beliefs and understanding of their roles and responsibilities to guide young people on ‘the right track’. As one teacher summarised in 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]

Crucial to teacher individual factors that influence their enactment of CSE, were their motivations to teach the programme. When asked why they decided to teach CSE, almost all CSE teachers reported that the school board selected them to teach the programme. Reasons for selection often were English level (the CSE curriculum is in English), knowledge of biology, and having good rapport with young people. Interestingly, almost all teachers said to feel 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 (see also Maes et al., 2015).

#### 4.5.2.2 SCHOOL CONTEXT

At the level of school context, CSE teachers highlighted that their enactment of CSE is largely influenced by the support of school management, or the lack thereof, and other available structures within the schools. Some teachers complained that the school management dedicated their resources to regular classes (as to prioritise results on national exams) thereby ignoring CSE, which affected CSE teachers’ motivation for the programme 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 programs. They have no interest to facilitate these issues.* [Town1, School4, Teacher11, male, FGD]

In the same school, the school director reported that the reason for the school to start with the CSE programme in the school is 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 program?*

*Director: It was the support of [the NGO] to introduce technology like computer use, and Internet to the students to enable them to reach the world. [Town1, School4, Director]*

The director also reported that the school lacked further resources to facilitate the programme to the extent they wished to do.

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 in the schools for dealing with cases of gender-based violence. In one school, an additional programme was available to promote menstrual hygiene. Interestingly, this additional programme has possibly influenced CSE teachers in adopting a focus on menstrual hygiene in lessons, which translated in what could be understood as reproduction of certain gendered prejudices (see section 4.5.1.3). Observations in schoolyards also witnessed prevalence 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 dismissing what they learned in CSE. Teachers had witnessed NGO-initiated extra-curricular programmes phased out after a certain period of time in other schools, which led to a suspicion and lack of interest of CSE teachers if the programme would not be mainstreamed into the regular curriculum, and they expressed concerns about the sustainability of the programme.

#### 4.5.2.3 SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Poverty was a main concern for the majority of the schools' population. The influence of this socio-economic environment on teacher enactment of CSE particularly translated to economic and supportive roles of CSE teachers, who were usually considered closer to their students than regular class teachers. Potentially, CSE teachers' association with NGOs and foreign aid also led to an increase of seeking financial support with 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 necessity to work outside of school hours. Some suggested CSE should be integrated in the standard

curriculum so as to reach the entire student population. When CSE teachers were asked about challenges they encountered in teaching CSE, the lack of material resources and economic challenges of the school population were the most cited issues. This was also confirmed by school directors:

*Yet, we lack resources to run this programme. So, to solve this we had to contact the NGO. (...) we want to continue this programme in the future; we will sacrifice any kind of resource and time we have to invest in this programme. The reason is that new topics that are not incorporated in the curriculum, are provided through this programme. [Town1, School1, Director]*

#### 4.5.2.4 RELATIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY

Almost all participants referred to community resistance and suspicion against the idea of providing education that discusses intimate issues of 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 a good spirit among the local community. [Town1, School4, PTSA-member4, male]*

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 [School3] when the teacher mentioned SRH topics like body parts, safe sex, STI, menstruation... the students were gossiping that their teacher is teaching them "balege" [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. The teacher's role in creating better understanding towards openness is very important. [D23, Local government representative, female, FGD]*

As the extract above illustrates, 'gossip' was experienced as a potential threat to the success of CSE initiatives. Participants spoke of the need for CSE teachers to be self-confident and 'courageous' in the face of student (and broader community) resistance. In fact, 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 influence of individual beliefs and style. 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 socio-economic and political context. Furthermore, the fact that teaching CSE was not remunerated made it a significant time investment for teachers.

## 4.6 CONCLUSION

Analysis of teacher enactment of CSE policy in schools revealed that teachers did not merely ‘facilitate’ the CSE programmes in schools but took up a range of additional roles and responsibilities in their schools and communities. These roles ranged from advising, to networking and advocating for CSE. Except for one, most CSE teachers did not mention addressing gender-based violence as a priority or role to take up unless prompted. Most references to CSE teachers’ ways to address gender-based violence related to the family or community of the school population (as also noted in Uganda by De Haas and Hutter, 2018). CSE teachers and their students regarded it to be the CSE teacher’s responsibility to intervene in cases of early marriage or abduction, even if their space to do so was limited because of ambivalent relations with the community (see also Maes et al., 2015) and limited supportive structures (Bhana, 2015; Vanner, 2017).

Focusing on teacher enactment and aiming to capture the multiple dynamics that shape and re-contextualize CSE policy at the level of the school, revealed that enactment of CSE was not influenced by teacher beliefs or cultural context alone, but was the outcome of a continuous mediation between curriculum text, community and school context, and socio-economic concerns. CSE teachers operated in a context where school management priorities centred around regular (examined) curriculum (see also Vanner, 2018), school population struggled making ends meet, and teacher professional status was weakening. In view of these socio-economic dynamics, the fact that CSE teachers did not receive remuneration for their additional efforts was a source of exhaustion and challenge to teach CSE in a way that satisfied them. Teachers’ associations to NGOs also increased their economic supportive roles towards their students. Such socio-economic dynamics of CSE enactment are overlooked in current CSE policy guidelines, which emphasise cultural factors instead.

Nevertheless, teachers did have to navigate sensitive terrain of cultural values conflicting with those in the community. In fact, not only did teachers re-contextualize CSE to fit what they identified as local priorities, but in turn, CSE policies also appeared to mould teachers into taking up advocacy roles. Particularly teachers’ strategies to overcome community resistance were important for understanding the dynamics of policy enactment processes at schools. Resistance was often related to the idea of speaking about sexuality in

mixed-sex classrooms to unmarried young people. However, when advocating for the programme, teachers emphasised the benefits of CSE such as increased self-confidence, encouragement of friendly non-sexual relationships 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' (see also Miedema et al., 2011), and mitigation of more controversial idea of 'sexuality' education, appears to be a direct response to the priorities teachers identified in the community, and their tailoring of contents to community values and national policy priorities. Teachers presented these strategies as ways to advocate for CSE, even if their strategies can be considered counter-productive to the comprehensive nature of CSE. Teachers thus made CSE more acceptable at community and local government level. Teachers' efforts to increase acceptability of CSE should be seen with a view to 'saving lives' and creating model citizens – a language more widely reflected in Ethiopia's policy enactments (Maes et al., 2015).

As authors such as Haberland (2015) have observed, while global guidelines give direction in terms of content knowledge, the ways teachers should deal with gender relations and address gender-based violence remains open to interpretation (see also Miedema et al., under review). 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 young women 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, but rather emphasised the importance of teaching the curriculum according to provided guidelines. As confirmed in other studies, teacher reflexivity and positionality are factors possibly affecting teacher enactment of policies aimed at addressing gender-based violence and areas to be further explored (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).

Hence, as became clear in this study, there is no unidirectional way of implementing a new policy, but enactment is an ongoing process of reflection, interpretation, and mediation in which teachers play central roles. Future education policies and programmes should thus pay attention to strengthening the positions of teacher, 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 in understanding the dynamics that define and re-contextualize CSE policy in schools and communities, where they are often faced with multiple demands particularly in view of

material scarcity. Local, national, and international actors should make efforts to include teachers' views, concerns, and daily realities, in the development of education agendas.