

# Gender and Participation in Sexuality Extra-Curricular Education in Primary Schools in Bugiri Municipality, Uganda

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doi:10.56397/SSSH.2022.10.01

## Abstract

The paper intended to investigate the incorporation of gender and sexuality in extra-curricular education among primary schools in Bugiri Municipality with focus on highlighting the significance of sexuality education outside of the classroom, to determine how much gender is considered in extracurricular sexual activities as well as identifying obstacles to gender inclusion in extra-curricular sexuality education. The study was qualitative in nature. Findings indicate that sex education helps reduce teen pregnancy, which can hinder possibilities for school and other aspects of life. It has been shown to be more successful in preventing STDs than education that only stresses abstinence until marriage. Sexually active teens are more likely to postpone their first encounter and take contraception overall. Too many young people get muddled and inconsistent information about relationships and sex. In addition, Sexuality education aims to raise awareness of gender-based violence and advance respect-based human rights for all. Such a position is hypothesized using inclusive and post-structuralist conceptions of gender and sexuality. The fact that these subjects have been handled successfully does not exclude linking them to utterances that can portray them as a potential threat. Further, many schools have created CSE curriculum, but difficulties with program design and roll-out prevent their complete implementation. Issues include ineffective methods for monitoring and evaluating teachers and pupils on CSE. Changes in educational administration (such as a change in the minister) affect implementation strategies. Conclusively, the process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical, and social elements of sexuality is known as *comprehensive sexuality education* (CSE) it strives to provide knowledge that will enable kids and teenagers to achieve their health, happiness, and dignity. CSE aims to spread awareness of gender violence and to advance respect-based human rights for all.

**Keywords:** gender, primary school, comprehensive sexuality education, human rights, school family initiative

## 1. Background of the Study

The International Conference on Population and Development and associated resolutions, according to Nicole & Deborah (2015), have frequently urged governments to give adolescents and young people *comprehensive sexuality education* (CSE). This source claims that in some contexts, CSE programs are looking for ways to link up with initiatives that have related objectives in other fields, such as programs for girls' financial literacy, media campaigns promoting the prevention of gender-based violence, and advocacy for the establishment of suitable legal frameworks that can affect the scope and impact of investments in CSE.

According to Kemigisha, et al. (2019), there hasn't been much study done on how well sexuality education works for VYAs in Sub-Saharan Africa who are between the ages of 10 and 14. Additionally, results of unsafe sexual behaviors are frequently documented in assessments of programs that teach about sexuality, while studies and reports on positive elements of sexuality are scarce. This study examines both positive and unfavorable outcome indicators to assess the efficacy of a *Comprehensive Sexuality Education* (CSE) intervention for VYAs in Uganda.

In their 2018 study, Achora, et al. looked at the opinions and experiences of teachers and students in relation to school-based sexuality education in rural primary schools. Results showed that adolescents benefited from school-based sexuality education, but constraints at the national, institutional, community, family, and individual levels made it difficult to implement programs.

Ine, et al. (2016) noted that since one in four people on the planet are under the age of 18 and more than half of the world's population is under 25, it is more important than ever to increase access to *Comprehensive Sexuality Education* (CSE), particularly for children and young people in Africa and Asia. The research has noted a number of difficulties in CSE delivery and implementation in settings with limited resources. If these difficulties were to be overcome better, CSE's efficacy may be significantly increased.

A study by Moore, et al. (2022) was worried about Uganda's current sex education panic, which has rekindled long-standing concerns about foreign intrusions in Ugandans' sexual health and rights. The study makes the claim that after a 35-year fight against HIV/AIDS and more recent human rights controversies, both of which attracted international donor resources and governance, the question of where and how to teach young people about sex became a new front in the conflict over the state's authority to control their health and economic well-being.

According to Evelo and Miedema (2019), the idea of "participation" in sexuality education has acquired a lot of popularity recently. Participation is now seen as a fundamental right and an essential tool for empowering young people. However, the idea has come under growing scrutiny as opponents have questioned the supposed influence of involvement in connection to the objectives of sexuality education and questioned how participation is operationalized. This essay adds to these discussions by exploring the gendered aspects of young people's engagement in sexuality education, which have received little attention in the literature. It makes use of information from a qualitative research on young people's (10–15 years old) opinions of the dance 4 life program, an in-school sexuality education program in Jinja district, eastern Uganda, that was carried out in 2015.

## **2. Aim of the Study**

The study investigated into gender and participation in sexuality extra-curricular education in primary schools in Bugiri Municipality.

## **3. Objectives**

- (a) To highlight the significance of sexuality education outside of the classroom in the Bugiri Municipality.
- (b) To determine how much gender is considered in extracurricular sexual activities.
- (c) To identify obstacles to gender inclusion in extracurricular sexuality education.

## **4. Theory of the Study**

The study will be guided by the gender theory developed in the academy during the 1970s and 1980s as a set of ideas guiding historical and other scholarship in the West. Looking at masculinity and femininity as sets of mutually created characteristics shaping the lives of men and women. It replaced or challenged ideas of masculinity and femininity and of people as operating in history according to fixed biological determinants (Bonnie, 2013). This theory guides that study in that it encourages the idea of balancing gender when handling social issues. In respect to this study, the gender theory suggests that learners should be exposed to sexuality education to avoid any forms of gender stereotyping.

## **5. Literature Review**

This includes importance of sexuality education, consideration of gender in sexuality extra-curricular education and challenges faced in inclusion of gender in sexuality extra-curricular education.

## **6. Importance of Sexuality-Extra-Curricular Education**

There are more than 2 million young individuals living with HIV globally, according to Hildie, et al. (2019). Additionally, according to the World Health Organization, young people are thought to account for one-third of all new HIV infections worldwide (aged 15–25). And adolescent pregnancy rates are rising across the board. These unsettling patterns imply that current treatments and programs for sexuality education may be insufficient and/or ineffective. Although the Programme of Action from the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) emphasized the need of governments providing sex education to youth in order to support teenage reproductive health, there is inconsistency in the associated worldwide activities.

The study by Fillipa, et al. (2018) described the comprehensive sex education (CSE) coverage and assessed a set of indicators pertaining to knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors connected to the seven components of the CSE framework among Mexican high-school students. Exposure to each CSE component was significantly correlated with the corresponding sexual health outcomes. The best was for identifying those who had access to effective contraceptives among those exposed to the Sexual and Reproductive Health component (SRH). Additionally,

students exposed to the relationships component had a 20% increase in the likelihood that they would say they could persuade their partner to use condoms.

Reginald, et al. (2019) reviewed recent and pertinent research on the variables that affect nurses' delivery of sexual healthcare education to patients. The results of this study's systematic analysis indicate that four factors may affect how nurses instruct patients on sexual health: nursing attitudes and views that sexual health treatment is private and not a priority, nurses' comfort with addressing sexual health, nurses' perceived hurdles relating to time, responsibility, and organizational support, and a lack of information about sexual health.

A narrative systematic review of the efficacy, research gaps, and priorities of life skills education was conducted by Nasheeda, et al. (2018). The results showed that poor nations and industrialized countries had different approaches to teaching life skills. In general, industrialized nations run more organized life skills education programs that encourage positive behavior, including studies outlining the results for specific kids. Contrarily, most life skills programs in underdeveloped nations lack systematic implementation, assessment, and monitoring. Programs are frequently run to produce just immediate effects.

Lindsey, et al., (2018) indicated that specific types of sexual assault prevention are often implemented on campuses in isolation, and sexual assault risk reduction and resistance education programs for women are rarely integrated with other approaches. With increasing focus on the problem of sexual assault on college campuses, it is timely to envision a comprehensive and interconnected prevention approach. Implementing comprehensive prevention packages that draw upon the strengths of existing approaches is necessary to move toward the common goal of making college campuses safer for all students. Toward this goal, this commentary unpacks the models and mechanisms on which current college sexual assault prevention strategies are based with the goal of examining the ways that they can better intersect.

## **7. Consideration of Gender in Sexuality Extra-Curricular Activities**

Marielle, et al., (2018) analyses the relations between gender-based violence and culture, as it is presented in CSE. It reveals that uncritical conceptions of tradition and modernity, as well as 'good' and 'bad' cultures in CSE, fail to address and discuss gender relations and patriarchy as the root causes of gender-based violence. This enhances the vulnerability of young women and the reduces the effectiveness of CSE in addressing gender-based violence.

Denis (2018)'s study is based on in-depth interviews with 19 queer learners, aged between 16 and 19 years and living and schooling in the Free State Province, South Africa. This paper contends that what queer youth say need from sexuality education is a curriculum that — recognizes sexuality diversity; is without assumptions about their sexual experience or lack of it and does not focus solely on associating non-normative sexualities with issues of disease, deviance and danger. The findings highlight the inescapable power of compulsory heterosexuality and its perilousness and argue for a more defined and inclusive sexuality education curricula framework.

Bragg, et al., (2017) explores the views of young people aged 12–14 on gender diversity, drawing upon school-based qualitative data from a study conducted in England in 2015–2016. Although earlier feminist and queer research in schools often found evidence of variable local gender cultures and gender non-conformity, we argue that the contemporary context, with its increasing global awareness of gender diversity, offers young people significant new ways of learning about and doing gender. Findings reveal that many young people have expanded vocabularies of gender identity/expression; critical reflexivity about their own positions; and principled commitments to gender equality, gender diversity and the rights of gender and sexual minorities.

Key study findings are outlined in Clara, et al (2019)'s summary, which include young people's opinions on sexting, their suggestions for better sexting teaching in schools, their preferred sources of support, and their opinions on how adults should react to young people's sexting. According to the research, sexting education must be established in the context of more general relationship concerns including gender, power dynamics, and peer trust, as well as increased communication between students and instructors or other responsible adults. The results might be used to how messages about sexting are created and distributed to young people both within and outside of school settings.

In their 2018 study, Ninsiima, et al. investigate how gender norms are socially constructed beginning in early childhood and how this affects teenagers' agency. Adolescents' agency appears to be restrained by context-specific barriers, which is in contrast to the standard idea of agency, which places emphasis on the capacity to make informed decisions. The findings demonstrate that gender norms are formed early in life and have a significant influence on the agency of young adolescents. There were stereotyped gender standards that portrayed males as sexually active and girls as repressed. Additionally, girls' movements were limited, their sexual agency was constricted, and it was believed that girls should be in charge of preventing pregnancy. Programs aimed at changing behavior must start early in young children's lives.

According to Kristin, et al. (2019), formative research was carried out to comprehend how and what sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information is shared with girls in southern, rural Malawi, as well as perceptions of such information among key informants, in order to reduce unintended pregnancy among adolescent girls. M/FGs were referred to as the “gatekeepers” to SRH resources and services, and many parents reported deferring SRH conversations until after their child’s sexual debut out of worry that doing so could encourage sexual behavior. Participants who were adolescents or M/FG indicated a wish for “outside specialists” or role models to give SRH education and to advance a different perspective on adolescent parenting.

### **8. Challenges Faced in Inclusion of Gender in Sexuality Extra-Curricular Education**

According to Keogh, et al.’s (2018) study, even though many LMICs have created CSE curriculum, difficulties with program design and roll-out at the national and local levels frequently prevent their complete implementation. Though few studies have looked at these hurdles, a deeper knowledge of them, as well as similarities and variations between nations, can aid in the development of methods to increase implementation. This study offers qualitative findings from in-depth interviews with central and local government authorities, members of civil society, and local stakeholders including youth representatives and religious leaders. Quantifiable findings from questionnaires given to administrators, CSE-teaching instructors, and students aged 15–17 in a sample of 60–80 schools spread over three areas in each nation, for a total of about 3000 students in each country.

According to Ngabaza and Tamara (2019), research on sexuality education in South African schools shows that while in theory schools are well positioned to provide appropriate knowledge for reproductive health and navigating sexual challenges within a gender justice framework, this is not the reality in practice. The objective of a critical and social justice pedagogy of sexuality in Life Orientation courses is being undermined, according to a growing number of qualitative investigations with educators and students in South African schools. Sexuality education has been used to control and repress young sexualities, reinforce and maintain gender binarisms and heteronormativity, restore global northern family values of the nuclear family within a pro-family discourse, and represent ongoing adult authority in a civilizing mission over young people.

Leigh According to the National Strategic Plan for HIV, STIs, and TB 2012-2016 and the Policy on HIV, STIs, and TB, launched in 2017, the life orientation (LO) learning area serves as the primary vehicle through which comprehensive sexuality education, including information on reproductive health, is delivered in South African schools. This essay examines concerns about LO implementation in secondary schools from the viewpoints of LO teachers and LO department heads. Findings indicate that limitations at the individual, interpersonal, school, district, and community levels prevent LO from being adopted and given in a way that is optimum. The quality of education provided by high- and low-resourced schools varies significantly as a result of resource limitations, and the expanded role and responsibility of LO educators in supporting students’ psychosocial needs in addition to their academic development emphasizes the significance of adequate training and institutional support at all levels.

Mumba, et al., (2019) individual teachers make decisions on their own regarding what and when to teach CSE. This discretion implies holding back information from the learners, teaching abstinence as the only way of preventing pregnancy or cancelling sexuality education sessions altogether. Teachers’ choices about the CSE program were linked to lack of guidance on teaching of the curriculum, especially with regards to how to integrate sexuality education into existing subjects. Limited prioritization of CSE in the educational sector was observed. The incompatibility of CSE with local norms and understandings about adolescent sexuality combined with teacher-parent role dilemmas emerged as problematic in implementing the policy. Limited ownership of the new curriculum further undermined teachers’ motivation to actively include CSE in daily teaching activities. Use of discretion has resulted in arbitrary teaching thus affecting the acquisition of comprehensive sexual and reproductive health knowledge among learners.

### **9. Methodology**

The research followed a qualitative research design. The qualitative approach was needed because studies such as ways of people’s lives, behaviors, emotions, and feelings, as well as organizational functions and social movements, among others, are better studied in ways that generate data, which are mainly qualitative. This was conducted among pupils, and the average estimates in the eleven government-aided primary schools; there are pupils in primary in five, six, and seven. On the other hand, the number of teachers differs by primary school with the help of Interview guides.

### **10. Findings of the Study**

#### *10.1 The Significance of Sexuality Education Outside of the Classroom in the Bugiri Municipality*

Findings indicate that many people believe that teaching sexual education in schools equates to teaching about sexual activity. In actuality, the word “sex education” is used broadly to refer to the study of human sexual

anatomy, sexual reproduction, and other areas of sexual behavior. Some instructors find it challenging and uncomfortable to teach sex education issues, despite their dedication to doing so. Among the interviewed teachers and pupils included; A P6 (Primary Six) class teachers who gave the idea below on how gender affect teaching learning process;

*“Regardless of different sex in P6 class, I have found it difficult to teach the topics; reproduction and body changes in primary six”*

He lamented. A P5 girl in her interaction with the data collector, this what she had to say on the shyness when interaction between boys and girls in their school Hindocha Primary School;

*“Boys mistreat us that we smell during menstruation, our teacher in charge of School Family Initiative in a family where I belong initiated re-usable pads making by pupils with teachers guidance and support from school administration, pads are made then distributed to adolescent girls; however boys tease us when in groups in the process of making, it pains me”* She concluded.

HIV prevention must include comprehensive sex education. It has been shown to be more successful in preventing STDs than education that only stresses teaching abstinence until marriage. Sex education helps reduce teen pregnancy, which can hinder possibilities for school and other aspects of life. Sexually active teens who participate in sex education programs are more likely to postpone their first encounter and take contraception overall.

Teenagers that receive sex education are better able to grasp their biological makeup and become more mature to avoid being sexually preyed upon. Additionally, it gives kids the confidence to speak out when their sexual boundaries are crossed. It is well known that nations with a more accepting and open approach toward sexuality have better outcomes in terms of sexual health. The process of educating and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical, and social elements of sexuality is known as comprehensive sexuality education. Children and young people are to be given the knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and values that will enable them to realize their health, well-being, and dignity; to form respectful social and sexual relationships; to think about how their decisions affect both their own and other people’s well-being; to comprehend and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.

As they advance from childhood to adulthood, too many young people get muddled and inconsistent information about relationships and sex. Young people now have a greater need for accurate knowledge that can help them live safe, fruitful, and meaningful lives. When properly implemented, CSE meets this need by giving young people the knowledge and skills they need to navigate a society where gender-based violence, gender inequity, early and unplanned pregnancy, HIV, and other STIs continue to pose severe threats to their health and wellbeing. In addition, a lack of high-quality, developmentally, and age-appropriate sexuality education may expose kids and teens to risky sexual practices and sexual exploitation.

It has been discovered that programs that advocate abstinence as the only option are unsuccessful at preventing sexual activity, lowering sex frequency, or lowering the number of sexual partners. Programs that include other topics with an emphasis on postponing sexual behavior are beneficial.

#### *10.2 To Determine How Much Gender is Considered in Extracurricular Sexual Activities*

Children and young people nowadays are developing in a new gender environment. It is critical to recognize our diversity in gender identities, sexual orientation, and expression and to foster an atmosphere that respects and celebrates them. Children and young people are shielded from stress, prejudice, bullying, and ultimately poor health outcomes by an inclusive society. Respectful environments promote the happiness, health, and self-assurance of transgender and gender nonconforming youngsters. Findings show that schools are crucial places for socializing, and teachers have a responsibility to promote interaction by paying attention to all representations. A private school student named Sofia, who is 13 years old, made a good comment by stating that; *“the teachers discuss and work on these subjects in the classroom”*.

That supports the need to normalize daily conversations about gender and sexuality. A comprehensive approach to caring for our bodies, cultural practices, and interactions between gendered beings are all part of comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), which invites educators and students to reflect on and become aware of gender inequality, gender diversity, and all these issues. CSE aims to raise awareness of gender-based violence and to advance respect-based human rights for all.

The crucial roles that gender and sexuality play in education are acknowledged by comprehensive sexuality education. Such a position is hypothesized using inclusive and post-structuralize conceptions of gender and sexuality, which are notably influenced by critical pedagogy and identity studies from a queer theory viewpoint. In their school experience, as well as that of many young people, the fact that they can use the bathroom according to their gender identity is the validation of the school’s acceptance of this difference. Another

important acceptance is the social name and the comfort it can generate.

The school is an important space for socialization and discussion, the teacher has a fundamental role in this mediation. When recognizing the difference in the school environment a teacher meets his daily challenges and at that moment his or her attitude may or may not collaborate with freedom and the recognition of different representations of gender and sexuality within this space. Young people's experiences highlight the value of making gender and sexuality discussions a regular part of the classroom environment because they help us understand how the school setting may be a place for the awareness of rebellious experiences in terms of gender and sexuality.

The friendly approach toward young gender and sexual minorities that teachers have experienced is valued, and it should be distinguished in the educational setting by acknowledging the differences. The fact that these subjects have been handled successfully does not exclude linking them to utterances that can portray them as a potential threat, for instance when disagreeable affective-sexual experiences are connected to illnesses.

### *10.3 To Identify Obstacles to Gender Inclusion in Extracurricular Sexuality Education*

Despite the advances in the battle over marriage equality, Australia hasn't been able to use them to provide comprehensive sex and sexuality education for children.

Although many schools have created CSE curriculum, difficulties with program design and roll-out at the local and national levels frequently prevent their complete implementation. Though few studies have looked at these hurdles, a deeper understanding of them, as well as similarities and differences amongst schools, can aid in the development of methods to increase implementation.

Other issues include the ineffective methods for monitoring and evaluating teachers and pupils on CSE, as well as the inability of the federal, state, and municipal governments, NGOs, and development partners to coordinate their varied initiatives. The curriculum wasn't given enough credit when it was incorporated into other topics, it wasn't sufficiently tailored to local circumstances, and there wasn't much stakeholder involvement in curriculum creation.

Key employees in the education industry change jobs frequently, both at the higher levels where political commitment is built and maintained and at the school level where enough instructors are educated. Changes in educational administration (such as a change in the minister) affect implementation strategies and their forward momentum in addition to causing a loss of political capital. Many schools still struggle with teamwork and coordination. These have been strengthened in a few schools, but much more work needs to be done to guarantee that all parties involved at all levels (national, regional, and local) are aware of their roles and responsibilities and that there are mechanisms in place to allow for high-quality implementation (and, potentially, scale-up) of CSE.

Financial limitations prevent some schools from implementing or expanding CSE. External assistance can be crucial, but without government backing, neither implementation nor scale-up will be successful, and long-term sustainability won't be conceivable. Depending on whether the training is pre-service or in-service, different amounts of time must be set aside for it. Although teacher training costs money, it will ensure that future sexuality education is of a high caliber. Alternatives to too-short, too-shallow stand-alone training sessions will be more effective. These courses are too brief to provide students the knowledge and assurance they need to teach the topic effectively.

The best assistance for CSE instructors is in-person, multi-day programs since they allot enough time for skill integration and practice. These courses are frequently provided during breaks from classes, depriving instructors of much-needed rest and family time.

## **11. Conclusions**

In conclusion, a lot of people believe that instructing students in sexual education is equivalent to instructing them in sexual intercourse. The process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical, and social elements of sexuality is known as comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), and it is based on curricula. It strives to provide knowledge that will enable kids and teenagers to achieve their health, happiness, and dignity. Respectful environments promote the happiness, health, and self-assurance of transgender and gender-creative youngsters. The goal of comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) is to raise awareness of gender inequity among both instructors and students. Findings also indicated that children and young people are shielded from stress, prejudice, bullying, and ultimately poor health outcomes by an inclusive society. Respectful environments promote the happiness, health, and self-assurance of transgender and gender-creative youngsters. CSE aims to spread awareness of gender violence and to advance respect-based human rights for all. Studies on identity from a queer theory viewpoint and critical pedagogy hypothesize inclusive and post-structuralist views of gender and sexuality. The school's recognition of this variance is demonstrated by the fact that students are permitted to use

the restroom in accordance with their gender identification.

According to results, despite advances in the discussion of marital equality, Australia has not been able to make these achievements into comprehensive sex and sexuality education for youth. Although many schools have created CSE curriculum, difficulties with program design and roll-out at the local and national levels sometimes prevent their complete implementation. Developing solutions to enhance implementation can be aided by having a deeper awareness of these obstacles as well as the similarities and differences among schools. The best assistance for CSE instructors is in-person, multi-day programs since they allot enough time for skill integration and practice. These courses are frequently provided during breaks from classes, depriving instructors of much-needed rest and family time.

## 12. Recommendations Affiliated to the Study

Regarding the significance of sexuality education, teachers, school principals, and other education stakeholders are expected to make teaching and learning more relevant, meaningful, and useful to learners through the policy guidelines that enhance sexuality education. In addition, the gender question has not been fully addressed when it comes to sexuality education in primary schools in Bugiri Municipality. It is very important to consider this as a priority to enhance the implementation of sexuality education in schools.

Concerted efforts are called for to enhance the universal implementation of sexuality education. Some challenges relate to a lack of resources and some to the attitudes of stakeholders. The government, in collaboration with development workers, ought to combine efforts and provide the necessary resources to implement sexuality education. Integration of sexuality education into existing subjects and prioritization of CSE in educational sector as well as incompatibility of CSE with the local norms that will enable parents to freely interact with their children other than opting for an outsider whom they feel is an expert. Friendly approaches towards young gender and sexual minorities by the teacher based on his or her experience should be valued and distinguished in the educational setting by acknowledging the differences.

Schools should have effective method for monitoring and evaluating teachers and pupils on CSE and using the whole community approach like municipal government, NGOs and other development partners to coordinate their varied initiatives and promote team work.

Curriculum ought to be given enough credit when incorporated into other subjects and topics to tailor the local circumstances and also have implementation strategies momentum. Regular revisit and parliament intervention on policy sensitization on CSE as well as the government financing and capacity building of teachers at all levels including the pre-service teachers and in-service teachers on CSE approach.

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