The Strategies of Teachers & Students in Sexuality Education

The case of one school-based programme in Ethiopia

Natalie Browes
May 2014

Supervisor: Dr. Hulya Kosar-Altinyelken
Second Reader: Dr. Mieke Lopes Cardozo
Abstract:
In recent times, comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) has emerged as an effective method of sexual health education, with the school being identified as a fitting site of implementation. Its holistic and participatory nature endeavours to develop the attitudes, life-skills, and knowledge necessary for its students to secure their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and more broadly, to bring about positive change in communities. Recognising its potential, this research aims to understand how micro (agentic) and macro (structural) factors affect the implementation of CSE, and how such programmes are perceived by local stakeholders.

The qualitative study was conducted in one secondary school in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The school, embedded in an environment where adolescent sexuality is considered taboo, and norms regarding gender roles greatly influence practice, implemented a Dutch-developed CSE programme throughout the year 2013. Over 50 in-depth interviews were conducted with various stakeholders; from teachers and students of the programme, to influential community members and SRHR experts. Data was also gathered through focus group discussions with students, and during classroom observation.

Results show that teachers and students of the programme (regardless of gender) were able to discuss issues of sexuality, despite acknowledging this to be against the cultural norm. Yet, the cultural context was also seen to influence the interpretation and discussion of information. This lead to programme modifications, in which both teachers and students played a key role. Finally, it was found that all stakeholders perceived a need for sexual health education, yet there was no consensus on the form this should take. To limit this influence it is recommended that CSE aims to involve the wider community, to reduce contradictory messages and increase programme support. Further, for CSE teachers to undergo extensive and comprehensive pre-programme training, that addresses their attitudes and values, not just their knowledge.

Key words: CSE, SRHR, gender equality, programme modification, Ethiopia.
Acknowledgements:

Many people have helped me in the researching and writing of this thesis. I am extremely grateful to all of them.

Firstly, I would like to thank all of my participants for giving me their time, stories and opinions. Not least to those students who stayed behind after school so I could pick their brains, and who did so with unwavering enthusiasm, and to Tsedale, whose heavy workload I fear I only added to, but which she took in her stride and with a smile. I would also like to thank Natnael, for his great help as a translator, and general support. I like to think that he also gained an interest in the world of SRHR along the way.

Further, I would like to acknowledge the support of DEC; for opening their doors to me for five months and for helping me to settle into Ethiopian life. It was also through them that I was able to gain a crucial in-depth insight into SRHR in the local context; broadening my knowledge and understanding, and meeting some interesting people along the way. I would also like to thank Rutgers WPF, for allowing me to be a part of their trainings, and for sharing their knowledge with me.

Also, of course, thank-you to my supervisor, Hulya, for all of her encouragement, constructive comments, and valuable suggestions. At times when inspiration wavered, and the writing process stuttered, they always enabled me to take a step back, see my work in a different light, and move forward.

Finally, to my sister and her role as official wordsmith; for reminding me that hope and usage do not make a word, and for her ideas and encouragement. Last but not least, as always, thanks to my parents for their unfaltering pragmatism and sense of humour.
Table of Contents

List of Acronyms................................................................................................................. 6

Chapter 1 – Introduction........................................................................................................ 7
  1.1 Aim & Relevance ........................................................................................................... 7
    1.1.1 Problem statement ................................................................................................. 7
  1.1.2 The Societal Importance of Sexuality Education...................................................... 8
  1.1.3 Academic/Scientific Importance .............................................................................. 9
  1.2 Research Question ........................................................................................................ 10
  1.3 Thesis Overview .......................................................................................................... 11

Chapter 2 – Theoretical Framework ...................................................................................... 12
  2.1 Sexuality Education .................................................................................................... 12
  2.2 Epistemological Position: The Strategic-Relational Approach .................................... 14
  2.3 The Agency Continuum ............................................................................................... 15
  2.4 Programme Implementation ....................................................................................... 16
    2.4.1 The Role of the School ......................................................................................... 16
    2.4.2 The Role of the Teacher ....................................................................................... 17
    2.4.3 The Role of the Student ....................................................................................... 19
    2.4.4 Curriculum Change & Development ...................................................................... 20
  2.5 Conceptual Framework ............................................................................................... 22
    Figure 1: Conceptual Scheme........................................................................................ 22
    Figure 2: Conceptual Scheme Explanation .................................................................... 22

Chapter 3 – Country Background ......................................................................................... 23
  3.1 Ethiopia ....................................................................................................................... 23
    Figure 3: Map showing location of Ethiopia .................................................................. 23
  3.1.2 Adolescents and SRHR in Ethiopia ........................................................................ 23
  3.1.3 Policy and SRHR .................................................................................................... 24
  3.2 Research Location ....................................................................................................... 27
    Figure 4: Map showing location of Addis Ketema sub-city, within Addis Ababa. .......... 27
  3.3 The World Starts with Me .......................................................................................... 28

Chapter 4 - Methodology ...................................................................................................... 29
  4.1 Research Methods ....................................................................................................... 29
    4.1.1 Classroom Observation ......................................................................................... 29
    4.1.2 In-depth Interviews ............................................................................................... 30
    Figure 5: Table of Respondents .................................................................................... 31
Chapter 5 – Programme Implementation by Teachers and Students .................................................. 36
5.1 WSWM in the Classroom ........................................................................................................... 36
5.1.1 WSWM Teachers .................................................................................................................. 37
5.1.2 WSWM Students .................................................................................................................. 39
5.1.3 Gender Differences in WSWM Lessons .................................................................................. 40
5.2 WSWM Outside the Classroom ................................................................................................. 41
5.2.1 Discussion with Friends ....................................................................................................... 41
5.2.2 Discussion with Family ......................................................................................................... 42
5.4 Concluding Remarks ............................................................................................................... 43
Chapter 6 – How and to what Extent does Cultural Context Affect Programme Implementation? .... 45
6.1: Messages & Modifications in the Classroom .............................................................................. 45
6.1.1 Issues of Capacity .................................................................................................................. 45
6.1.2 A Neglect of the Most Sensitive Issues & Heteronormativity .................................................. 46
6.1.3 Enforced Adolescent Abstinence .......................................................................................... 48
6.1.4 Persisting Gender Norms ....................................................................................................... 48
6.2: Messages beyond the Classroom ............................................................................................... 49
6.2.1 Influence at the School Level ............................................................................................... 49
6.2.2 Influence at the Household Level .......................................................................................... 51
6.2.3 Influence at the Community/Societal Level .......................................................................... 52
6.3 The Extent of Influence ............................................................................................................. 53
6.4 Concluding Remarks .................................................................................................................. 55
Chapter 7 – Need, Relevance and Quality ....................................................................................... 57
7.1 Defining Relevance and Quality ................................................................................................. 57
7.2 Student Perceptions of Relevance and Quality .......................................................................... 57
7.3 Implementing Stakeholders’ Perceptions of Relevance and Quality ............................................ 59
List of Acronyms

ABC – Abstinence, Be faithful, use Condoms
CR – Critical Realism
CSE – Comprehensive Sexuality Education
DHS – Demographic Health Survey
EDHS – Ethiopian Demographic Health Survey
FGDs – Focus Group Discussions
FGM – Female Genital Mutilation
GBV – Gender Based Violence
HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HTPs – Harmful Traditional Practice
INGO – International Non-Governmental Organisation
MDGs – Millennium Development Goals
MoE – Ministry of Education
MoH – Ministry of Health
NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation
SHE – Sexual Health Education
SRA – Strategic Relational Approach
SRH – Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRHR – Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
SSA – Sub-Saharan Africa
STI – Sexually Transmitted Infection
WHO – World Health Organisation
WSWM – World Starts With Me
UN – United Nations
Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Aim & Relevance

In recent years, comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) has come to be seen as a way of tackling not only issues of sexual health, but fundamental societal problems. There is a need for such education worldwide, but none so great as in environments where gender inequality is high and adolescent sexuality is considered a cultural taboo. This thesis looks at the implementation of a CSE programme in one such environment. Focussing on one secondary-school in Ethiopia, it seeks to discover how teachers and students negotiate implementation of a Dutch-developed programme; the way in which the pre-set curriculum is enacted both in and out of the classroom, and the influence the cultural setting has on this process. Finally, it will examine stakeholders’ perceptions of the programme; its need, quality, relevance and outcomes, to determine to what extent it has addressed adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) issues.

1.1.1 Problem statement

Sexuality is a fundamental aspect of human nature, yet an aspect that is still considered taboo. This is especially true with regard to adolescents, yet this group constitutes around 20% of the world’s population, or 1.4 billion people (WHO, 2013), and research has shown time and again, that despite such taboos, a considerable number are sexually active.

The shame and fear of discussing sexuality with adolescents has resulted in misinformation, a lack of knowledge and skills, and negatively-skewed attitudes towards sex. This, in turn has resulted in unsafe practises. The WHO (2014) estimates that globally, more than one million people acquire an STI every day, and that over 60% of these cases are in the under 24’s. Further, these dangerous practises have contributed to a global HIV epidemic, of which sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is the biggest victim. A 2012 report by UNAIDS, claims that SSA accounts for 69% of infected people worldwide (UNAIDS 2012), with young women at particular risk.

Unsafe adolescent sex can also lead to unwanted pregnancies, complications including higher proportions of stillbirths, unsafe abortion, and a risk of school expulsion and social exclusion. WHO (2012) estimates that worldwide, 16million adolescent girls give birth every year, and an estimated three million undergo unsafe abortions. Worldwide, unsafe abortions are estimated at an average of 21/22 per 1000 women. These figures are highest in the East Africa region, standing at 36 unsafe abortions per 1000 women.

Yet problems and their causes go beyond this, and to be fully understood, need to be placed within a socio-cultural framework. Harmful gender norms and power inequality persists, proving particularly damaging to the health and rights of women across the world, and creating environments where women may not be able to refuse sex, or negotiate safe sex. The extent of this inequality can be illustrated by borrowing a few statistics from the NGO

---

^1 Defined by the WHO as 10-19 years
Womankind; women make up two thirds of illiterate individuals worldwide, globally, one in three women has been abused in her lifetime (including sexual coercion), and despite producing the vast majority of food in developing countries, are more likely to go hungry than their male counterparts (General Assembly 2006, cited in Womankind 2014). As well as the impact this has on basic rights, the instrumental affects are also great. The continued suppression of women and girls and their lack of access to information and services, has been shown to dramatically slow economic development (Klasen 2002, Seguino 2000).

Yet, we should be careful to not just focus on these negative aspects of SRHR. Pleasure, love, support and happiness are central aspects of sexuality and relationships, yet have become lost in an overarching ‘problem preoccupation.’ The issues discussed previously; gender inequality, lack of access to information and services, judgemental attitudes, and feelings of guilt and shame that have come to surround sex, prevent individuals and couples from enjoying these positives, ultimately reducing ones quality of life.

1.1.2 The Societal Importance of Sexuality Education
In light of these issues, the absolute importance of securing the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of individuals is being realised. The first widely recognised discussion of SRHR took place at the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development almost 20 years ago, during which the WHO gave a comprehensive definition; not just the right to avoid disease, but the right to make informed decisions, to have access to safe, affordable and effective methods and services, and the right to a ‘satisfying and safe sex life.’

Education is key to achieving this. Indeed, studies including those carried out by UNICEF, UNWoman, DHS, and the World Bank, reveal the benefits of effective, comprehensive sexual health education (or SHE), to be numerous and far-reaching. This includes considerable health benefits; reducing the instances of unsafe sex, sex for material gain, unwanted pregnancies and harmful practises including GBV and HTPs, as well as wider benefits; healthier adolescents with greater self-efficacy, who are more likely to stay in education for longer. As well as resulting in happier and healthier individuals, it has, in turn, potentially great economic benefits; including a more productive and better educated workforce.

With regard to the development of nations, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are also currently considered an important indicator. Braeken and Cardinel (2008) argue that CSE can directly contribute to achieving five out of the eight MDGs:

Goal 1: *reduce poverty and hunger:* as sexual education can result in healthier individuals, reduce unwanted pregnancies, and keep youth (especially girls) in school longer. This can lead to adults who are active and productive members of society who are better able to provide for themselves and their families.
Goal 2: **achieve universal primary education**: as argued above, reducing the spread of HIV, STIs, unwanted pregnancy and early marriage, often increases the time that girls spend in school. Further, sexual education may result in girls with greater knowledge of their sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as greater self-efficacy, and who pass on ‘empowered’ values such as the importance of education to their children, especially their daughters.

Goal 3: **Promote gender equality and empower women**: comprehensive sexual education can build skills as well as knowledge that can lead to the empowerment of girls and women. Addressing unequal, gendered power relations can help shine a light on harmful cultural practices and increase the confidence and ability of girls to negotiate safer sex. As shown above it can also contribute to greater gender parity in education.

Goal 5: **Reduce maternal mortality**: by building awareness of sexual and reproductive health, and the skills to put this knowledge into practice, women are better able to avoid the dangers of giving birth as young girls, as well as the dangers of illegal abortion. Furthermore they are better able to adopt healthy pre natal and post natal practices and pass these practices onto their daughters.

Goal 6: **Combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases**: as well as providing information, contraception and skills to reduce the likelihood of infection, sexual education can also increase awareness of sexual diseases and reduce the taboos surrounding them.

Surprisingly, Braeken et al omit Goal 4: **reducing child mortality rates**. Indeed, it has been shown that CSE can help to reduce child mortality rates, both directly – through improved knowledge about infant care, and indirectly - through contributing to a better overall education of the mother and building skills such as self-efficacy and decision-making skills that can be used to secure resources and to negotiate resource allocation within the family (UNICEF, 2011).

Beyond its role in achieving the MDGs, as shown, effective SHE has great potential in terms of improving health, education levels, and gender equality, and is especially valuable in terms of the effect that it can have on vulnerable women worldwide. As will be explained in greater detail later, this is no less true of women in the Ethiopian setting. Yet a crucial term in these discussions is **effective and comprehensive** education. Indeed, these wide-ranging outcomes are only possible if these criteria are met. The defining characteristics of CSE, and how it is set apart from other approaches to SHE will be discussed in the following chapter.

1.1.3 **Academic/Scientific Importance**
Academically, this research aims to help better understand the micro and macro factors that shape the environments in which sexual health programmes are implemented. There is a growing body of research concerned with the teaching process; especially what characteristics help or hinder teachers from implementing sensitive material. Students
However, have long been overlooked as key actors in the implementation process. Even if a teacher is able to talk openly, teaching is a two-way process, and their students must be willing and able to participate. Indeed, students operate in the same socio-cultural framework as their teachers, and are subject to the same mechanisms that make these discussions problematic. Further, past research has often had an overly structural (Ahlberg 2001, Bhana 2012, Rogow, 2013) or agentic (Berger et al 2008, Maxwell & Aggleton 2010, Mkumbo 2012) focus, the limitations of which will be discussed in the following chapter. This study understands these phenomena as dialectic and seeks to understand one’s impact on the other. It is believed that this will not only uncover cultural constructs that affect SRHR and CSE implementation, but will also uncover the factors that enable actors to overcome these constructs.

1.2 Research Question
Recognising the potential that CSE has, not only in term of problem reduction, but in helping individuals secure fundamental rights and to live safe, healthy and enjoyable lives, this study aims to better understand the factors that might prevent this potential being reached. This includes both agentic, and structural factors, as well as the design of the programme itself. All of these things might affect programme implementation and limit effectiveness.

The main question this research seeks to address is:

How is the implementation of a sexuality education programme negotiated by teachers and students in an Ethiopian school, in their efforts to address adolescent SRHR issues, and how is its relevance, quality and outcomes perceived by stakeholders?

In order to help answer this question, a number of sub-questions have been devised:

- How is the programme implemented by teachers and students?
- How, and to what extent, does cultural context affect programme implementation?
- How do stakeholders perceive the relevance and quality of the programme?
- How do stakeholders perceive programme outcomes?
1.3 Thesis Overview

Following this introductory chapter, the theoretical chapter explains the epistemological position from which the study was approached, and the previous research that was used to inform and frame it. Chapter 3 then provides information regarding the study site, to help the reader better understand the research environment. This includes cultural and economic characteristics of Ethiopia, and as well as the SRHR issues of adolescents in the country. It also provides some background information about the ‘World Starts With Me’ - the CSE programme at the centre of the research. The methodological chapter that follows details the research methods used and the actors involved in the study. This chapter also highlights ethical and data considerations. The main findings of the study are presented and discussed in the successive data chapters (chapters 5 to 8). This is organised by sub-questions of the study; Chapter 5 focussing on programme implementation, Chapter 6 on the impact of the cultural setting, Chapter 7 on the perceived need, relevance and quality of the programme, and Chapter 8 on outcomes. Finally, conclusions are drawn in Chapter 9, in which key findings of the study are linked to broader theories, the main research question is answered, recommendations are made, and further research is suggested.
Chapter 2 – Theoretical Framework

2.1 Sexuality Education

Since the 1980s, largely as a result of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, there has been increasing focus on the importance of providing youth with sexual health education in sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries. Many of these education programmes focused on knowledge building, and stressed the importance of ‘abstinence first’ and access to free condoms. Their main goal was to increase risk awareness (especially in relation to HIV/AIDS), in order to change the perceived risky sexual behaviours of adolescents.

Yet despite often positive results in knowledge transfer, many of these programmes saw limited impact regarding behaviour change (Aggleton 1997, Agha 2004, Kaaya 2002). This lack of impact is the result of two separate, yet interlinked issues. Firstly, that programmes often failed to acknowledge and address the socio-cultural context of implementation, which was often unfavourable to programme goals. As such, hidden barriers including taboos and unequal gender norms, prevented any considerable impact. Secondly, the way in which SHE is interpreted and therefore implemented. This interpretation varies considerably depending on the stakeholders involved and the context of the programme. This will now be discussed further.

Three separate approaches to SHE have been identified:

In many countries, there is a dominance of the morality based approach. This presents a narrow understanding of sexual health, is often fear-based, and serves to pass on prevailing religious and moral values. As noted by Braeken et al (2008);

“It seems that health issues such as unwanted pregnancy, STI and HIV are of lesser concern that the importance to assert the sexual moralities of communities” (p 52).

Such an approach may preach the immorality of sex out of wedlock, or the evils of homosexuality, but fails to engage with the lived realities of youth. The failures of this approach are seen when comparing the high number of STI and unwanted pregnancy cases in the U.S. (where this approach dominates) with the much lower rates found in the Netherlands, which adopts are more information-based approach (Weaver et al 2005).

Approach number two is also somewhat one-dimensional; the health approach. This is often promoted as value-free, focusing on the biological aspects of sex and minimising health problems that can result from unsafe sex, most notably – the spread of HIV. It has led to programmes that promote ABC (abstinence, being faithful, and condom use). Lacking however, is an understanding of the power relations and embedded societal values which may prevent youth acting on the advice given. Further, there remains a ‘problem preoccupation’ leading to a skewed view of sexuality as something that is negative, dangerous and shameful.
To address the weaknesses of these approaches, an increasing number of researchers are calling for sexual education to be embedded in a social studies framework (Braeken et al 2008, Rogow 2005) and to use a rights-based approach. This approach is adequately summed up by the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, 1991 (cited in Braeken, 2008);

“Sexuality education is a lifelong process of acquiring information and forming attitudes, beliefs and values about identity, relationships and intimacy. It encompasses sexual development, reproductive health, interpersonal relationships, affection, intimacy, body image and gender roles. Sexuality education addresses the biological, socio cultural, psychological and spiritual dimensions of sexuality from a cognitive affective and behavioural domain including skills to communicate effectively and make responsible decisions” (p50).

Therefore, SHE does not have just one function, such as decreasing HIV rates, but becomes more holistic. It takes into account both the risks and pleasures of sexuality, as well as the decision making, communication and negotiation that are a key part of sexual relationships (Aggleton and Campbell, 2000). Problem avoidance is no longer the central goal, rather, to help individuals to flourish, by focussing on their right to live informed, safe and enjoyable lives, with these rights being framed within the social context and local power dynamics. As well as teaching sex and reproduction, there is a focus on relationships, culture and gender. It links to the empowerment of individuals, aiding them in developing the skills required to take control of their lives and to critically consider the decisions that they, as well others, make. As such, this type of sexual health education is referred to as CRSE (comprehensive rights-based sex education) or CSE (Comprehensive sexuality Education).

By adopting a more intrinsic, holistic approach that builds not only knowledge, but positive attitudes and skills, it moves beyond the weaknesses of previous approaches. It is this comprehensive rights-based approach that provides the framework for the education programme on which this research is focused; ‘The World Starts With Me’ (WSWM).

We also see these issues rising in importance on the global stage. According to Rijsdijk (2012) this right-based approach emerged on a global scale in 1994, when reproductive health and gender equality were ‘specifically placed in a human rights-based framework in the Cairo Programme of Action’ (p1). During this international conference on population and development, 179 countries pledged to ensure their citizens had the basic right to decide the number and spacing of their children, the right to the information and services to support them in doing so, and the right to the highest attainable standard of SRH, free from discrimination, coercion and violence (UN, 1995). The right to complete and accurate information on SRHR issues has since become enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989).
2.2 Epistemological Position: The Strategic-Relational Approach

Subscribing to CSE philosophy, this study holds that acknowledging local context and the powers and norms that shape it, is crucial to deliver an impactful programme. However, the effect that this context has on the programme itself should not be overlooked, with cultural ideas of appropriate and inappropriate adolescent behaviour, and embedded notions of gender and power, influencing both a programme’s implementation and its outcomes. As such, the research looks deeper than a purely empirical level and takes a critical theory approach. Cox (cited in Robertson and Dale, 2009), argues that a critical stance means standing aside from the prevailing order and asking how this order came about. The actors in the study are not seen as value-free, but their behaviour will be placed within the context in which they operate. For example, CSE teachers are not merely ‘neutral facilitators’, but have been shaped by their context, their experiences and their roles within the community. Therefore, the study will not take the world at face value, but rather question the power relations and norms that shape and surround actors’ behaviours, and consider how this may lead to actions that complement or contradict the CSE programme. More specifically, I will adopt the Strategic-Relational Approach as a lens through which to observe and understand behaviour...

The strategic-relational approach (SRA) is a critical theoretical approach developed by Jessop and Hay in the mid 1990’s. With its foundations in Bhaskar’s ‘critical realism’, SRA moves beyond previous approaches in terms of how it views the structure-agency relationship and the emphasis that it places on strategy and context. Before this is discussed in more detail, a brief explanation of the Critical Realist approach (CR), from which it is borne is perhaps necessary. CR starts from the belief that there exists a world independent of our knowledge of it. A defining aspect is the emphasis that is placed on causality – explaining the actions that people, as individuals or as collectives, take. Actions therefore are triggered by causal mechanisms, however these mechanisms may not always be apparent and observable to the researcher (Sayer, 2000). Indeed, CR identifies that there exists three dimensions of reality, which come together to explain the relationship between cause and action, and thus, explains social phenomena. The first of these dimensions is the empirical: that which we can directly observe. In the case of sexual education therefore, it may be observed that there is a high prevalence of teenage pregnancy amongst girls in one community, thus warranting the need for sexual education. Second, the actual: this includes things or events that happen regardless of our experience of them. In this example, this may be the girls’ reduced ability to negotiate condom use, resulting in high rates of unwanted pregnancy. Third, the real: the structures, mechanisms or powers that are invisible but affect that which we observe, through producing the actual. This would include the patriarchal society that has resulted in unequal gendered power relations, and effectively, the subservience of women.

In this Critical Realist light therefore, and as Dale (2009) points out, what is important is not so much an inductive or a deductive approach, but a retroductive one;
getting the researcher to ask the question; ‘What needed to have happened for this to be the case?’ (In effect, asking the researcher to draw attention to the ‘real’). Furthermore, by focusing on hidden mechanisms and causality, and how this impacts on a macro as well as a micro scale, CR acknowledges the equal importance of structure and agency.

SRA begins from this idea of invisible causal mechanisms and the three dimensions of reality. Where it diverges from CR, is in its understanding of the nature of the structure-agency relationship. Not only does it dedicate equal importance to the two, avoiding the criticisms of earlier theories that were seen as neglecting one or the other, but it also moves beyond theoretical approaches that have themselves tried to encompass both, including that of Bhaskar.

“It examines structure in relation to actions and actions in relation to structure. Structures are thereby treated analytically as strategically selective in their form, content and operation; and actions are likewise treated as structurally constrained, more or less context-sensitive, and structuring” (Jessop 2005, p48).

Therefore, SRA aims to address the perceived limitations of other approaches by placing an equal focus on agency and structure, viewing them as intertwined and inseparable, yet dynamic; with the way in which one affects the other changing according to context. This dialectical relationship is key to understanding all social phenomena. Understanding both agency and structure as dynamic and specific to spatio-temporal context, also helps us to understand the notion of strategic-selectivity. That is, at any one given time, structures may privilege some actors over others (Jessop 2005). However, far from being passive objects, frozen by potential constraints, SRA sees agents themselves as strategic actors, in the sense that they make decisions and take actions based on the structural context in which they find themselves. These strategic choices may not always be conscious or reflective, but are made nonetheless. Therefore, a certain actor will make a strategic calculation based on the strategically-selective context. This will in turn lead to a strategic action, which will result in either the transformation or reproduction of reality. Adding this third dimension of ‘strategy’ stands SRA apart from other approaches, and is a concept that is key in shaping this study; the strategies that teachers and students adopt to implement a programme that may be considered culturally inappropriate.

2.3 The Agency Continuum

By acting within a strategically selective context, individuals will experience and enact their agency in different ways, due to this context favouring some actors over others. This notion has been termed by Bell (2011) as ‘agency within constraint’. However, I argue that to view actors as either having or being denied agency, merely due to their environment, shows a misunderstanding of the complexities at work. To rectify this, I subscribe to Klocker’s notion of agency as a continuum (cited in Bell, 2011).
This continuum ranges from **thin agency**: ‘decisions and actions that are carried out within highly restrictive contexts, characterised by a few viable alternatives’, to **thick agency**: ‘having the latitude to act within a broad range of options’ (p284). Agency may move along this continuum as a result of the impact of a range of external and internal influences. Therefore, an individual may experience ‘thick’ agency in one situation, yet ‘thin agency’ in another. As such, I hypothesise that not only will agency be expressed in different ways by different actors due to the strategically selective setting, but that agency will be expressed differently by the same individual in different situations. This will affect behaviour in (and out of) the classroom setting and an actor’s response to the CSE programme. Yet, it is also hypothesised that the programme itself will have a (positive) effect on agency, developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes that foster greater confidence and self-efficacy.

### 2.4 Programme Implementation

To place this theoretical framework in more concrete terms, we now turn our attention to the structures and actors that will be found in the study. As a school-based programme, unsurprisingly, this predominately concerns those actors and settings found within this environment.

#### 2.4.1 The Role of the School

The school has been identified as an important setting for the teaching of sexual health for a number of reasons. To start, many studies have shown that sex in sub-Saharan African countries often begins at school going age (around 14), sometimes younger (Kaaya et al 2002, UNAIDS 2001, UNICEF 2012). Therefore, the need to target youths at an early age is paramount in order to more effectively shape safe sexual practices. Second, schools have the capacity to reach large numbers, especially as primary school attendance levels have risen throughout sub-Saharan Africa over the past 20 years (UNICEF 2012), with an increasing number of countries offering universal primary education. According to UNICEF (2000), 67 percent of those enrolled in primary school reach grade 5, providing a captive audience until early adolescent years. Furthermore, youths often lack access to health facilities, whether as a result of geographical barriers, socio-cultural barriers, or lack of information. Therefore, the school as an institution has great potential; not only as a crucial mediator; raising awareness about health services, but also in itself - as a site for preventative intervention (Kaaya et al 2002).

For these reasons, the school has been, and continues to be the chosen site of implementation for many sexual education programmes across the world. However, assuming the school is a neutral and safe environment, conducive to free expression and the transformation of social norms, is at best simplistic, at worst dangerous. Indeed, studies have shown that schools can be institutions where harmful beliefs concerning sex and gender roles are reproduced; by both students and teachers, male and female. A school ethnography conducted by Mirembe and Davis (2001), revealed four forms of control being exercised; hegemonic masculinity, gendered discipline patterns, sexual harassment and...
compulsory heterosexuality. It is argued that these practices are not only harmful in themselves, but were in direct conflict with the teachings of the sexual health programme that was being implemented in the school. Therefore, as noted by Bhana ‘schools are not immune from the social context in which they operate’ (2012, p353).

Francis (2010) also acknowledges the existence of these harmful norms and practices in many schools, yet argues that this is not reason enough to renounce them as sites of implementation. Indeed, finding a local site of implementation that is free from this social context is an almost impossible task. ‘While it can be concluded that the school environment may be less than ideal, in practice, it offers the best available option’ (Francis 2010, p316).

2.4.2 The Role of the Teacher
In accepting the (relative) suitability of schools as a site for the implementation of sexual health programmes, the teacher in turn becomes the central actor within this. Like the school setting in which they operate, it may be over simplistic to view the teacher as a value-free information disseminator. Rather, I argue that they should be seen as strategic agents working within certain social contexts, on various levels. For example, as discussed previously, schools have been shown to be sites of gendered practices and the reproduction of harmful norms. Studies by Smith & Harrison (2013) and Mirembe & Davis (2001) in secondary schools in South Africa and Uganda, revealed that both male and female teachers were seen to continuously reproduce gender norms, both in their treatment of students, and in their treatment of fellow members of staff. Numerous studies have also revealed the sexual harassment of girls by male teachers within the school environment, with these unequal power relations and gender norms being cited as reason for this (Bhana 2012, Human Rights watch 2001, Plummer et al 2007, Smith et al 2013). Indeed, the study by Plummer et al showed that this does not exclude teachers of the sexual health programmes.

On another level, the wider community setting also considerably affects teacher behaviour and programme implementation. Prevailing norms may be in direct contrast to programme teachings, and studies have shown that despite teachers having the knowledge to teach sexual education, they are often reluctant to challenge prevailing socio-cultural norms (Francis 2010, Helleve et al 2009, Mkumbo 2012, Pokharel 2006, Smith et al 2013). This may result in programme modifications. Whilst Francis (2010) promotes the role of teacher training in reducing these challenges, some studies reveal that even with training, these issues still persist. A study by Plummer et al (2007) revealed teachers’ concern regarding parental resistance to sexual health programmes. Teachers believed that parents equated condom promotion with sex promotion, and would pull their children out of the programme as a result. This led to a revision of the curriculum, with the teacher reducing the amount of time they spent discussing condoms. In fact, it is reported that only in a small number of cases did parents pull their child from the programme (Plummer et al p508), but whether a real or a perceived threat, these fears reflect the rigid framework in which the programme is being implemented. Whilst teachers did not report abandoning the teaching
of condoms all together, the perception of the disagreeable structural setting was great enough to act as a moderator of change. This is compounded by studies that show teachers of sexual health programmes often feel they lack support from fellow members of staff (Goldman et al 2013), which makes dealing with such pressures all the more difficult.

At another level still, we should also consider the impacts of the national setting. Although not a focus of this study, it does acknowledge that national policies may have a substantial effect on what type of SHE is delivered in schools, and what has come to be considered as the ‘norm’ amongst teachers and students. More generally, education policies will also affect teacher (and student) workloads and their teaching priorities, including a focus on exam based material (Altinyelken 2010). Further, as Rijsdijk argues, at this level the legal system may also play an important role in beliefs and practices concerning sex. As she discovered in a study in Uganda, adolescent males were particularly concerned about a law stating that if a man has sexual intercourse with a girl under the age of 18 years, he is committing a capital offence for which the maximum sentence is death by hanging. This law does not specify the age that constitutes a man, and reportedly has led to the arrest and imprisonment of some adolescent males (Rijsdijk 2012 p4).

However, we must be careful not to become lost in a sea of structure in these discussions and neglect teachers’ agency. Indeed, there is a growing body of research focusing on teacher characteristics, and the effect that these have on the likelihood that they will teach subject matter considered risqué (Berger et al 2008, Goldman 2012, Mathews et al 2006, Oshi 2005, Smith et al 2013). These studies vary in focus, some looking at biographical characteristics such as age and gender of the teacher, others personal traits such as self-efficacy, and others still focusing on the type of SHE that the teachers themselves received as an adolescent. All concluded that these individual factors had a considerable effect on the way in which sexual education was taught, and a teacher’s ability to discuss embarrassing, or even taboo issues.

Moreover, as this study concerns itself with teacher-student interaction, what is particularly relevant is the way in which a teacher views their students, and how this might affect teaching strategies. Wight (1999) argues how the concepts of childhood, certainly in Western society have changed considerably over the past 200 years; from a traditional view, to a protective one, to a liberationist one – emerging in the 1970s and holding that children have independent legal rights. More recently however, researchers are advocating an empowerment perspective, holding that children are “skilled social actors in their own right, generating their own understanding of the world”(Wight 1999, p234). Indeed, it is this view of adolescents that the WSWM programme advocates; asking teachers to provide their students with the skills and knowledge to enable them to develop their own opinions and make their own decisions.

However, in terms of youth and sexuality, conceptions of childhood are still somewhat lagging behind, not least in SSA. There seems to be an inherent difficulty in perceiving youth as sexual beings, who can experience sexual desire and pleasure (Braeken
et al 2008, p55). Instead there persists an image of youths as naïve and innocent, who are in need of protection rather than information. This leads to beliefs that they will be corrupted by sexual education, and to programmes that focus only on the negative aspects of sex (Braeken et al 2008). Yet, as noted by Francis (2010) “Youth cannot act in empowered ways without being treated as agents” (Francis 2010, p315).

Therefore, the extent that teachers acknowledge the agency of their student, will affect the content and nature of teachings. This recognition of agency may not be afforded to all pupils equally however, with teachers’ perceptions of gender roles dictating the treatment of their students. A study Mirembe & Davis (2001) showed that girls were portrayed by teachers as either victims or as ‘fallen’ - and therefore as temptresses. Either way, their sexuality was only defined in relation to boys. Smith and Harrison (2013) consolidate this view, stating; “Teachers’ attitudes towards (youth) sexuality tend to be judgmental, especially for girls” (p76). When coupled with research showing that in the SSA context, girls tend to remain quiet in sexual health lessons (Patman & Chege cited in Francis 2010, Smith et al 2008), we see that this often results in an environment where female students are not encouraged to participate, thus reproducing norms of girls as submissive and their male peers as dominant.

2.4.3 The Role of the Student
Yet teachers are not the only actors involved in programme implementation, and neither do they operate within this selective social context alone. Indeed, if we suppose that a teacher is able to shed the confines of structure to the extent that they teach even those sexual health topics seen as taboo by society, the students which they teach still operate within these structures. Despite this, as noted by Tabulawa (2004) in both research and policy, ‘the teacher has often been singled out as the most important change agent, to the exclusion of other participants’ (p53). Arguably, research has tended to either view students as passive actors (Tabulawa 2004, Wight 1999), or as the answer to effective programmes, through student-driven curricula (Rogow & Haberland 2005). I argue that the role of the student lies somewhere in between these two extremes. Whilst students play a key role in negotiating and adapting programmes, relying on student-driven curricula to address youth’s ‘real needs’ is problematic. This is because, as Wight (1999) points out, the way in which students perceive their needs is shaped by past education, past experience, and beliefs about what is and what is not appropriate in a given socio-cultural setting. Like teachers, we should therefore consider students within this framework. Traditional messages from influential actors such as parents and religious leaders may lead students to be embarrassed and reluctant to discuss certain sexual topics, or not even to consider that they might be discussed.

---

2 It is understood that the term ‘traditional’ may have imperial connotations. It is recognised that this is a Western interpretation, however it is used throughout the study as a way of illustrating socio-cultural values that have (internally and externally) been seen to dominate in Ethiopia in recent history.
Further, unsurprisingly, the needs of one student may differ from the needs of another. Indeed, it has been widely acknowledged that reasons for having sex and being in relationships differ for male and female adolescents (Ahlberg et al 2001, Mirembe et al 2001, Rijsdijk 2012). With boys more likely to cite the urge for sexual pleasure, and girls citing material or financial gains. Furthermore, due to structural and agentic factors, the way in which these needs are expressed will also vary. For example, as we have learnt, girls in SSA classrooms tend to participate much less in sexual health lessons than their male peers. This is perhaps unsurprising, keeping in mind the patriarchal settings in which these schools operate lead to certain beliefs and behaviours about gender and sex, usually resulting in particularly judgmental views of girls (Mirembe 2008, Smith 2013). However, as previously mentioned, we must be careful not to interpret agency in dualistic terms; as present or absent, the dominant and the submissive, the powerful and the powerless. Indeed, many studies have shown girls to express agency in numerous, yet often subtle ways (Bell 2012, Bhana 2012, Maxwell & Aggleton 2010), the nature of which is dependent on internal as well as external factors. Here, our interpretation of agency as a continuum (moving on a sliding scale from thick to thin) is useful: due to gender norms, a female student may feel embarrassed, and considered ‘easy’ if she were to share her knowledge or opinions during a sexual health class. Her classmate however, although operating within the same setting, may come from a home where she discusses SRHR issues with her parents or siblings, and thus feels relatively confident in the classroom to share her knowledge, (in this environment, her agency moves towards the ‘thick’ end of the continuum). Therefore, whilst we must acknowledge the important of the structural setting on actors, we must not neglect their ability to negotiate this in different ways.

As such, this study will not view students as empty vessels, but as dynamic actors, who play a key role in the implementation process. Tabulawa (2004) demonstrates that in the classroom setting, students use a number of strategies to shape the lesson and the role of the teacher. At times these strategies were subtle — ‘playing possum;’ keeping silent when encouraged to interact (p64), however as argued in the study, these are powerful strategies nonetheless, requiring the teacher to adapt their lesson plan. It is this co-construction of the classroom environment and its effect on curriculum that is a central focus of this study.

2.4.4 Curriculum Change & Development
As we have seen, teachers may adapt curriculum due to (perceived) outside pressures, yet it also may be adapted as a result of other pressures, including student perceptions and behaviours in the classroom. Several researchers have developed theories of curriculum modification, to explain the different forms it may take. Shawer (2010), based on Snyder’s work from 1992, identifies three main ways in which curriculum decisions are made and enacted:

Curriculum Fidelity is said to occur when teachings adhere to a pre-planned structure, set by a textbook series, a guide or in the case of WSWM, a computer-based programme. The
teacher’s role within this is merely as a bridge between the curriculum developers and the students. As Shawer notes, this top down approach is based on organisation rather than local needs, and does not encourage critical thinking or active learning.

Curriculum Adaptation
This approach remains top-down, in that curriculum is still set by experts. Yet in this model, the teacher plays a more active role, modifying the curriculum through interactions with students. However, the teacher plays the driving role here, as it is their knowledge, skills and experiences that determines their ability to involve the students and shape their interaction.

Curriculum Enactment
This model places the teacher and students at the centre of curriculum development and implementation. Curriculum is seen as an ongoing process which is jointly experienced by teachers and students. In this respect, the focus becomes less about implementing a particular curriculum, and more about ‘a process of growth’ for teachers and students (Shawer 2010 p174). In this sense, curriculum development is bottom-up and student-centric, rather than pre-specified teachings.

In these models, curriculum change is equated with skilful and experienced teachers and enthusiastic students. As such, modifications are generally viewed as positive; enhancing the curriculum, or making amendments where the standard curriculum may be seen to lack relevance. However, in relation to WSWM, these theories will be used more broadly. As an expert-written and computer-based programme, it may seem that there is room only for curriculum fidelity in the WSWM classroom. Yet, this does not mean that changes cannot occur. Indeed, teachers and students may decide to skip activities, might fail to discuss or clarify computer-based information, or might interpret programme messages in ways that were not originally intended. Therefore, rather than curriculum adaptation, perhaps a more suitable term, and one that will be used throughout the study is programme modification. That is, adaptations for reasons that might not necessarily be to improve programme relevance or enjoyment for students, but may be an effect of the cultural setting – as seen in Plummer’s study where the time teachers spent teaching about condoms was reduced.
2.5 Conceptual Framework

Based on these theories, a conceptual framework has been developed, to better understand the structures and actors in the study, the interplay between them, and the effect of this on programme implementation (figure 1). An explanation of this scheme follows in figure 2.

Figure 1: Conceptual Scheme

Figure 2: Conceptual Scheme Explanation

The conceptual scheme is adapted from Hay (2002), and demonstrates the actors, structures and processes that surround the implementation of a CSE programme, and the relationships between them.

At the centre left of the scheme, the agent at the heart of the study is represented; in this case, both the teachers and students of the CSE programme. These agents consist of unique (biographical) characteristics, experiences, and identities. Surrounding them and represented by embedded layers, is the structure in which they operate, the ‘strategically selective setting’. Most immediately is the classroom setting, within which the programme is delivered. This is further embedded within the school and community setting. In a wider context, these are framed by the national setting. This may influence the school and community in terms of national policy, law and governance. These settings hold certain norms and values and reproduce certain practices. They are described as ‘strategically selective’, as they favour some actors over others.

It is in this context that we see the implementation of the CSE programme (represented by the red box). It is the calculations and actions in view of this programme, with which we are concerned. Calculations are deemed ‘strategic’, as they are not value free, but incorporate an awareness of external ‘selective’ factors, and are shaped by those individual characteristics that make up the agent. This calculation results in an action (shown on the right of the diagram). This action may contradict programme teachings—a sign of modification, or stay faithful to them (programme fidelity). This in turn, affects outcomes. One outcome may be behaviour change, and a transformation of reality. Another may be a reproduction of norms and values, resulting in no considerable change. Depending on the quality of the programme, and its ability to address the needs of its students, both programme fidelity and programme modification could lead to either.

If the programme is perceived to add the needs of its students, it is hypothesised that fidelity will have a positive (transformational) effect (represented by line 1). However, if the programme is regarded as irrelevant, or of poor quality, such a change will not happen (line 3). Modification may be carried out to address this. In this case, a modified programme may better suit student needs, and result in transformation (represented by line 4). Modification may also occur due to culturally-aligned interpretations of the programme, resulting in the reproduction of norms (line 2). A final possibility, (also represented by line 3), is a programme of relevance and quality, and fidelity to this programme resulting in reproduction, due to student inability (the result of structural influence and/or personal beliefs) to act on information.
Chapter 3 – Country Background

To better understand the settings represented in the conceptual scheme, and the values and norms that shape them, this chapter provides some background information about the country of study, with a special focus on SRHR issues. This is essential to better acknowledge and understand those elements of the study that lie beyond the empirical; the hidden causal mechanisms that shape findings.

3.1 Ethiopia

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is a landlocked country located in the Horn of Africa, bordered to the North by Eritrea and Djibouti, Kenya to the South, Somalia to the East and Sudan and South Sudan to the West. With a population of just over 91 million (World Bank, 2012) it is the second most populous country in Africa, though with only 17% of its population living in urban areas, it is also one of the least urbanized countries in the world (DHS, 2011). According to UNICEF statistics, adolescents (defined as 10-19 years), make up 25% of the total population.

Aside from Liberia, Ethiopia is the only African nation to have maintained its sovereignty during the scramble for Africa. Its population consists of around 80 ethnic groups. The dominant religion (accounting for over half of the population) is Orthodox Christianity, with around one third defining themselves as Muslim (DHS 2011).

At US$380, Ethiopia’s GNI per capita is somewhat lower than the regional average of US$ 1,547 (World Bank, 2012). However, it has been experiencing considerable growth over the past decade, averaging a rate of 9.9% per year between 2004-2012. This was largely through growth in the service and agricultural sectors. According to World Bank data, this growth has brought with its reductions in poverty with 38.7 percent living in extreme poverty in 2004-2005 compared to 29.6% in 2010.

3.1.2 Adolescents and SRHR in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is a patrilineal society, where girls traditionally marry young, stop school and begin child bearing. Like many SSA societies, gender roles are deeply entrenched and gendered
Power relations have a strong bearing on cultural practices and everyday lived reality. This is reflected in harmful traditional practices (HTPs) that remain across the country, including the high levels of female genital mutilation (FGM). UNICEF and DHS figures (2011) place FGM rates at 74% of the total female population. Despite this high figure, data shows prevalence to be decreasing. Amongst women aged 15-19, 62% have undergone FGM. This compares with 73% of women aged 20-24 and over 80% of women aged 35 and older (CSA et al, 2008). Other HTPs existent in the country include wife abduction and early marriage. DHS 2011, reveals that 8% of rural women have been married by abduction (where the girl is forcibly taken, raped and forced to marry her abductor). Nationally, 8% of adolescent women are married by age 15, with particularly high rates in the Amhara and Tigray regions in the North of the country. All of these practices are considerably less prevalent in urban areas.

Research has also revealed sexual harassment and abuse to be a concern. A 2007 study, (DHS 2007, cited in DHS 2011) showed that over 41% of sexually active high school students face sexual harassment at home or school. Amongst young married women, 10% report having experienced physical domestic violence from their husband. Attitudes towards gender-based violence show why these figures are so high. 51% of adolescent males and 64% of adolescent females believe that wife beating is justified. Although amongst women, this figure is lower than for older age cohorts, for men, it stands considerably higher (UNICEF 2011). All of these statistics paint a picture of an environment where women may feel unable to say no to sex due to fear of abuse, fear of losing their partner, cultural pressures, economic dependence or losing out on financial/material gains.

With regard to sexual activity, EDHS surveys (2011) show that age at first sexual debut is closely related to age at first marriage. Both have increased over the past six years. Amongst women aged 25-49, 29% first had sexual intercourse before the age of 15, and 62 percent before the age of 18. Women make their sexual debut on average 4.5 years earlier than men (EDHS, 2011), and urban women are typically older than their rural counterparts at sexual debut. Further, it is seen that a woman’s age at debut increases with levels of education and wealth.

3.1.3 Policy and SRHR
In 1993, with high and unsustainable population growth, the transitional government adopted a national population policy. The main goal of this policy was to reduce the total fertility rate by increasing contraceptive prevalence, reducing maternal and infant mortality rates, and increasing the number of girls in schools at all levels. There were also efforts to mount a nationwide, family planning education programme to reduce family sizes.

To some degree, we can see that these goals have been achieved. Since the mid 1990’s, maternal and infant mortality rates have reduced (World Bank 2011, UNICEF 2011), age of marriage and age at sexual debut have increased, and contraceptive use has increased from 4% in 1990 to a reported 34% in 2011 (DHS, 2011). Furthermore, there is evidence of
increased knowledge – HIV awareness statistics may perhaps be indicative of this; 32% of adolescent males have comprehensive knowledge of HIV. This is somewhat higher than the figure for female adolescents (24%), yet encouragingly, knowledge of adolescent females was seen to be higher than for older age cohorts (EDHS 2011).

Gains have also been seen in terms of education, including female education, with higher proportions of the adolescent population enrolled in school than ever before. However, whilst primary school enrolment rates are encouragingly high at over 100%\(^3\) (World Bank 2011), completion rates are much lower. Only around 58% of females complete primary school, which is lower than the average for sub-Saharan Africa (70%). Completion rates for males in Ethiopian primary schools also stand lower than the SSA average; at 61 and 74 percent respectively. These figures are of particular interest to this study, providing an insight into access to school-based sexual health programmes.

In terms of sexuality education, this currently remains limited in Ethiopia. The education that does exist has been incorporated into the biology curriculum. Lessons include reproduction and puberty, but are approached from a purely biological point of view. Therefore, social aspects of sexuality, including the negotiation of safe sex, are excluded. At the university level, some form of sex education has been available to all enrolled students for several years. This is supported by various governmental departments.

However, it appears that efforts are being made to enrich this education at all levels. According to a research Official at the Ministry of Education, following a lack of behaviour change, university-based SHE is becoming more skills-based. At school level, the Ministry has been working with various stakeholders (including INGOs and other ministry departments) to produce age-specific sexuality education manuals. For secondary school students (grades 9-12), these manuals were said to include information on; the development of life-skills (including decision making, negotiation skills and confidence building), gender based violence, risky behaviours (including the effects of drugs and alcohol), and finally on reproductive health. It was reported that the main messages of these manuals is abstinence (ideally until marriage). If this is not possible, then sex with one partner and the use of condoms.

Implementation of these manuals at secondary level is set to commence in the year 2014. They will be distributed to regional education bureaus, which have the role of dissemination and guiding the implementation process. It is not known whether these manuals will be given to schools to be used by teachers and students at their discretion, or whether they will become a formal part of school curriculum.

\(^3\) Rates exceed 100% as this includes those who are enrolled, but are over the age of 18.
Manuals for elementary level (grades 5-8) are still in the development stage. A puberty book for girls has also been developed, to be distributed to 4,000 schools across the country. This will be used as a reference book, to be kept in school libraries and accessed by students if needed. A boy’s equivalent book is currently in its planning stage.

A meeting at the Ministry of Health revealed further gains that were being made in the field of SRHR. The Ministry’s 2006-2015 health strategy identifies six priority areas:

- The social and cultural determinants of women’s reproductive health
- Fertility and family planning
- Maternal and new born health
- HIV/AIDS
- Reproductive health of young people
- Reproductive organ cancers.

A representative from the ministry reported that considerable gains had already been made as part of this strategy. For example, abortion has become legal under certain circumstances; if the pregnancy endangers the health of the mother, if the pregnancy is a result of rape, and if the pregnancy is the result of incest. Further, that free antenatal care has now been extended to all women, regardless of age or marital status. It was reported that access to contraceptives has also improved, with a range of contraceptives being available to all, in pharmacies and health clinics.

“If a 16 year old girl goes to the health centre it is free, at the pharmacy she pays a very limited amount. If she takes two pills [emergency contraceptive pill], at least she prevents the case of pregnancy and she can continue her education. That is why the government is trying too much on making available this family planning for all, especially for adolescents, as they can make mistakes” (MoH worker, department of maternal health, f).

Despite such gains, barriers remain. Several SRHR experts spoken to expressed their concern regarding services not being youth-friendly. This concern it seems is well placed. Research carried out into the attitudes of health service providers towards unmarried youth, revealed that out of 423 health workers surveyed, almost half displayed a negative attitude to providing unmarried adolescents with family planning services. Moreover, around 13% expressed a need to set up penal rules against unmarried adolescents practicing pre-marital sexual intercourse (Tilahun et al, 2012).

Further, attitude change and rights afforded to individuals do not necessarily take a path of ‘linear progression’ (certainly not as understood by those in the Global North). The current Ethiopian government has been seen to take a tough and suspicious stance on the work of rights-based NGOs – especially non-Ethiopian organisations. Such work has been interpreted as criticising the government, and even equated with terrorist acts. Indeed, the ‘rights’ of SRHR has been dropped from all local discourse – and the term SRH used instead. Similarly, over the past few months, set in the context of the aftermath of Uganda’s globally
publicised tougher sentencing on homosexuals, and a national discourse that often links homosexuality with paedophilia, there is mounting pressure from several mainstream groups, some with close links to the government, to harden anti-gay laws.

In summary, although this data paints a picture of a country where gains are being made, it also reveals that there is some way to go in terms of changing attitudes towards gender equality (amongst both men and women), adolescent sexuality, and equal rights for all. Whilst we should be careful to draw too many conclusions from these statistics, they do provide a picture of a country where gendered power relations remain strong and norms concerning appropriate and inappropriate behaviour remain deeply-rooted.

3.2 Research Location
Research was carried out in one secondary school in the city of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia’s capital and largest city. The population of the city has recently been recorded at 3.1 million (Ethiopian central statistics agency, 2013) yet this figure is believed by many to be an underestimation. As the location of the African Union, as well as many international organisations and Embassies, it is also known as the political capital of Africa.

The school itself was located in Addis Ketema, a sub-city in the North-East of Addis Ababa. Close to the city’s main bus station – connecting people to all parts of the country, and Merkato – Africa’s biggest daily market, the area is bustling, although economically, one of the poorer parts of the city. Most of the students in the study were living in this surrounding area. The government-owned school comprised grades 9 and 10, the first two grades of secondary school. If students complete these grades, they may have the opportunity to continue onto grades 11 and 12 elsewhere, and from there, university. The majority of students ranged in age from 14-18 years. The school is considered large by local standards, hosting a total of 2,136 students (52% female) and 118 members of staff (24% female), (school data, 2013).
3.3 The World Starts with Me

The CSE programme at the heart of this study is the ‘World Starts With Me’ (WSWM), a Dutch-developed, computer based CSE programme. First implemented in Uganda in 2003, it has now reached 13 countries world-wide. In Ethiopia, a pilot phase of the programme ended in 2012. This included a re-contextualisation of the curriculum to better fit the Ethiopian setting, and the implementation of the programme in 13 schools in two regions of the country. It also included a monitoring and evaluation element, where students and teachers could provide their input. This led to additional information being incorporated into the programme, although previous research showed that despite some local concerns, no information was eliminated (Schaapveld, 2013). A three year scaling-up period is now underway, hoping to reach 85 primary schools, secondary schools, and out-of-school centres across four regions by the end of 2015. Research for this study took place towards the end of the first year of the scale-up period, in the one school that was implementing the programme in Addis Ababa at the time (data from coordinating NGO, 2013).

Aimed at 12-19 year olds, WSWM advertises itself as a comprehensive, rights-based sexual health programme with a student-centred and (in part) student-driven curriculum, designed to improve knowledge as well as develop key skills such as critical thinking, confidence building, decision making, and computer skills. It includes biological aspects of sex, as well as social and cultural aspects, and is composed of 16 lessons – plus a final exhibition class, during which students exhibit their work to those invited (NGOs involved, teachers, parents). The programme is computer-based, with both a teacher’s and a student’s forum, acting as a guide for each class. For the Ethiopian version of the programme, all information is in English. Students work in small groups around computers, on which there is a structured lesson led by on-screen peer-educators and consisting of slide presentations, providing the students with all necessary information. These are often complemented by more interactive on-screen exercises, including quizzes, click-and-drag games, videos and questions to consider both individually and as a group. Following this are off-screen exercises, often with the aim of reinforcing lesson information, such as role-plays and poster presentations.

Teachers are required to take on a facilitatory role; guiding the students through each class, monitoring their activities, encouraging group discussions, clarifying information, and organising off-screen activities. In each implementing school, one teacher is identified as the ‘Master Trainer’. This individual is responsible for the programme, and undergoes training sessions (led by the developing and coordinating organisations), which engages them with its main goals and philosophies. This includes respect for everyone, openness, separating fact from opinion, and encouraging and trusting students to form their own opinions. Master teachers also choose an ‘Assistant Trainer’ to support them with the programme. Often, assistant teachers also attend training. Before the programme starts there is also a sensitisation process, in which school managers and department heads partake in a meeting in which the programme and its goals are discussed.
Chapter 4 - Methodology

As a qualitative study, research was focused on gaining an in-depth understanding of how CSE is perceived and implemented in an environment where adolescent sexuality is largely considered a taboo, and the effects of this on programme outcomes. This was not limited to the teachers and students of the programme, but included the perceptions of stakeholders not directly involved, to better understand the broader implementing environment and how this might influence teachers, students and ultimately – implementation. To achieve this, three main data-collection methods were used; classroom observation, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. These will be further explained in this chapter, along with supportive methods used. Following this, the epistemological position that framed data collection will be discussed, the way the data was analysed, and finally, ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

4.1 Research Methods
Qualitative methods were used to collect the data for the study. The three main methods used were classroom observation, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. These were supplemented by other observation and information-gathering methods.

4.1.1 Classroom Observation
The WSWM programme began in the school in January 2013. However, not all lessons, 0-16, were completed by the end of the school year in July. As such, the programme was continued the following school year (October 2013). It was these continued classes (lessons 11-15) that were observed. Lesson 16, consisted of an exhibition, in which students presented highlights of the programme and work they had produced to a variety of stakeholders. This exhibition was also observed.

As originally, the number of participants in the programme exceeded 80, the students were separated into two groups for the classes. Therefore, each lesson was observed twice (apart from the exhibition, where both groups participated together), resulting in a total of 10 classes being observed. Observation was unstructured; notes were taken whilst sitting at the back of the classroom regarding the set-up of the class, the participation of the teacher(s), the participation of the students, teacher-student interaction, student-student interaction, and the discussions that were taking place in the classroom. A print out of the lesson-outline for each class was at hand to see how closely the lesson adhered to the recommended structure. As classes were conducted in a mixture of English and Amharic (the local language), a translator was present when possible, for eight out of the ten classes.
4.1.2 In-depth Interviews

In-depth, semi-structured interviews provided the backbone of data collection. Aside from students and teachers of the WSWM programme, teachers and students who were not part of the programme were interviewed. Outside of the school, influential community members were spoken to, as well as a variety of SRHR experts.

In addition to asking more specific questions about the programme itself, the interviews sought to gather broader information about views, experiences and behaviours concerning adolescent sexual health and sexual health education. All interviews that took place outside of the school; SRHR experts, government officials and members of the community considered as influential, were conducted in English with no translator. These interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 1 hour. Within the school, teachers and students were asked whether they would like a translator present. This resulted in a translator being used for the majority of student interviews and half of the teacher interviews. These interviews were conducted in a mixture of English and Amharic, depending on the participant’s confidence and language ability. All interviews were recorded following consent being given. Participants were told they could ask for the recorder to be switched off if they felt uncomfortable. None requested this. Student interviews lasted between 15-35 minutes. Interviews with members of staff, slightly longer at 25-45 minutes, and with teachers of the programme, between 1-1.5 hours.

Thirty WSWM student participants were chosen at random. All students who had enlisted in the programme were numbered, and then a random number generator programme was used to identify those who would be interviewed. Out of this list, four students were not located; a mixture of illness, and school leavers. Four students were picked at random during classes to compensate. Teacher participants were selected based on their roles within the school, and their willingness to be interviewed. For a full list of interviewees, see figure 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Method</th>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-depth Interviews</td>
<td>WSWM students</td>
<td>Female = 13 Male = 17</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-WSWM students</td>
<td>Female = 4 Male = 4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WSWM teachers</td>
<td>Female = 1 Male = 1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-WSWM teachers</td>
<td>Female = 1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.3 Focus Group Discussions
Two mixed-sex focus groups were conducted with students of WSWM, to gain a deeper but also more lateral insight into their thoughts about the programme, SRHR, and the issues affecting them more generally. Group data collection in mixed-sex groups is of particular importance for this study, as adolescent sexual activity is often peer-influenced and something that is negotiated, usually between members of the opposite sex. Furthermore, the programme itself takes place in the dynamics of a group setting.
Participants were selected on a voluntary basis. Students were eager to take part, resulting in 17 students in the first focus group (eight female) and 12 in the second (6 female). A translator was present for both sessions and instructions were given in both English and Amharic. Discussions were held in a mixture of English and Amharic, and were recorded with the consent of all. Students participated in a mixture of individual, group and plenary activities, to better understand the issues they considered important to them, their views on SRHR matters, and how and to whom they talked about such things.

4.1.4 Top Tip Books
As part of the final exhibition class, and as a WSWM legacy, students were encouraged to create ‘top tip’ books. These are books consisting of the key lessons or ‘tips’ that students have taken from WSWM, and would like to pass onto their peers. Ten of these books were selected at random and photocopied, in order to better understand the messages that students remembered and prioritised, and the way in which these messages were interpreted.

Figure 6: ‘Top Tip’ Book & Excerpt
Left: An example of a ‘Top Tip’ book, produced by a male WSWM student
Below: One page from the book, focussing on gender roles
4.1.5 Analysis of WSWM Programme
Prior to carrying out any lesson observation, the online version of the WSWM programme was closely analysed. Both the teachers’ and the students’ forum was explored, to gain a clear understanding of; the structure of the lessons, their aim, the way that information was presented, the on-screen and off-screen activities that accompanied it, and what was required of the teacher and student. This was key in order to notice deviations from this structure, and whether interpretations of programme information conflicted with lessons goals.

4.1.6 Field Diary
Finally, a field diary was kept during the entire five month period spent in Ethiopia. Notes were made during research-related activities, as well as during activities not directly related to the study. This was done to record personal observations about Ethiopian culture, programme implementation, the school and wider environment, and any other observations considered of interest. These observations helped to frame my empirical findings, providing a more comprehensive overview of the study site. They also helped to add colour to other research methods, and to trigger memories of events and experiences when analysing data.

4.2 Data Analysis
All classroom observation notes, interviews, and focus group discussions were transcribed and uploaded onto the qualitative data analysis programme, Atlas.ti. After being read and re-read, data was meta-coded based on research questions, theory that framed the research and any other themes that emerged during the reading process. After this initial coding, sub-codes were created to better categorise the data. This process was then repeated, creating further sub-codes. The coded data was then analysed using programme tools, to establish patterns and main findings. Quotes which demonstrated these findings were then extracted.

Steering my analysis, will be a critical and layered ontology. As explained in Chapter 2, a strategic-relational approach will be used to consider not only what is being said by respondents and what is being observed directly, but the hidden mechanisms and unobserved interactions that precede these empirical findings. Further, this perspective will also help to discern differences between actors. Finally, this approach will consider not only what is, but what is not; what is not being said, those actors not involved in the research, and the reasons for and implications of this.
4.3 Ethical Considerations
As a social researcher adopting a critical realist position, I am aware of the importance of understanding the context of data-collection, specifically —my influence in shaping this. Indeed, I do not stand outside of the SRA framework, but am myself shaped by certain characteristics, experiences and socio-cultural contexts. As Sayer (2000) notes; my gender, socio-economic, religious, educational and national identity means that my stance can never be seen as entirely neutral, and this will impact my data. Further, participants perceive my identity in a certain way, and this in itself may influence interaction and findings (see data considerations). However, given that researchers are themselves social beings, I argue that standing outside of this social order is impossible, and neither is it desirable. Yet, throughout my time in the field and the writing of my thesis, I will reflect on this standpoint, and aim to make explicit any assumptions that my study makes.

During the research, great care was taken to treat all those involved with utmost respect. All actors were informed about the nature of the study, their right to withdraw from it at any point, and assured that all information would be treated in confidence. Indeed, it was ensured that all information was treated anonymously. In the cases where names of organisations or programmes were used, this was only if requested and/or if formally permitted.

Ethical considerations are especially important when working with those under the age of 18. Due to the sensitive nature of the research, and as it was unclear whether all parents were aware of their child’s involvement in the programme, it was decided that privacy should be respected and parental consent was therefore not sought. Rather, the consent of the participants themselves was obtained, as was the school’s contentment with the nature of their students’ participation.

4.4 Limitations of the Study
It should be remembered that this is an in-depth study, and seeks to better understand programme implementation in one school. Whilst it is hoped that these findings will contribute to broader theory, and understanding implementation in a variety of environments, it is not necessarily representative of other schools implementing similar programmes. Further, due to time and access restrictions, not all actors that were originally hoped to be, were involved; with the views of parents of WSWM students absent. To counter this, student perceptions of parental views were sought. Teachers and other stakeholders were also asked about the reaction of parents to the programme.

Further, when carrying out culturally-sensitive research such as this, respondents and responses should always be considered critically. Regarding the former, it should be noted that students joined the programme voluntarily, around half doing so following a recommendation from a teacher, who had singled them out as appropriate. Interview data reflects that teachers encouraged students who they considered to be ‘serious’ (hardworking and participatory) and who would be committed to the programme.
Struggling or withdrawn students were therefore not encouraged to join. Further, the timing of the class (after school), may have excluded those students involved in income-generating activities, or who were required to help in the home. In short, WSWM students are more likely to be studious and motivated, and from families where education is prioritised.

Regarding the latter, all participants were made to feel as comfortable as possible (see ethical considerations). However, the role of socially-pleasing responses should not be ignored, especially regarding particularly sensitive data, such as relationship status and sexual experience, and when asking about opinions of the programme. This effect was minimised through data triangulation, the use of comprehensive country-wide studies such as EDHS, the reliance on observation, and the involvement of a range of actors.
Chapter 5 – Programme Implementation by Teachers and Students

This first data chapter addresses sub-question 1; how the CSE programme is implemented by its teachers and students. It reveals that teachers and students are able to implement the programme without resistance, and discuss issues of sexuality in the classroom, despite recognising that this goes against cultural norms. Further, that amongst students, such discussion in not limited to the classroom, but they also report discussing programme issues with friends and family. The nature of these discussions; the messages given and the level of detail varies. The chapter shows that the WSWM teachers’ ability to implement culturally sensitive material is predominately attributed to the training they received through the CSE programme. Students largely believe their ability to do so is linked to the encouragement of other key actors, namely WSWM teachers and parents.

5.1 WSWM in the Classroom

Due to total participant numbers exceeding 80, students were divided into two groups. Usually, each group would have one training per week, occasionally two. Given that a few students dropped out in the early stages (teachers believed this was due to class timing and class length)\(^4\), some left the school, and not all were able to attend every class, average class size was hovered around 25-30. Despite girls in the school outnumbering boys, there were more male than female WWM students, at around 3:2. This may be as girls are less able to attend activities outside school hours due to home-based duties, yet this remains speculation. Students ranged in age from 14-18 years.

All observed lessons began with teachers setting a warm-up activity (usually student-led) followed by a student-driven re-cap of the previous lesson. Following this, students would form groups averaging four-seven (predominately mixed sex) around the computers, and work through the on-screen slide presentations. As the number of slides often exceeded 40, teachers were observed to divide them up, each student given two or three slides to read through and discuss with their group. Students were then observed to read out their slides in turn in a plenary session. Whilst students were at computers, teachers were observed to walk around the room, answering questions and checking all activity was lesson-based. If time allowed, once students had presented their slides there was an interactive off-screen activity.

Although all programme information was in English, the students were usually heard discussing information in Amharic, the local language. Student presentations were made either in English or Amharic, the choice of the individual, and teachers gave instructions in a mixture of the two languages.

During classes, students and teachers were observed to be enthusiastic. Students, regardless of age and gender, participated in all aspects of the classes, from group

\(^4\) After waning concentration was observed in the students, drinks and snacks began being provided in each class.
discussions and plenary discussions to presentations and role plays. At the computers, students engaged with the material; reading the lesson in English, translating it and processing it through group discussion. Plenary discussions and other off-screen activities were observed to be open, informal and relaxed. These reflections can be seen in this field diary extract;

Students are sitting in groups of 4 or 5 eagerly discussing the lesson material on their computers. All seem to be participating. Once each student has taken their turn reading out their allocated material to the group, they are asked to prepare role plays to help demonstrate refusal skills. Although somewhat shy to begin with, soon there is much laughing and noisy discussion as these plays are created and rehearsed. They are presented with great enthusiasm. Each presenting pair is of opposite sex, with the female student refusing the male. One girl gets so carried away, she slaps her partner across the face, much to the enjoyment of the group.

5.1.1 WSWM Teachers
The two WSWM teachers had similar backgrounds; in their late twenties to early thirties, defined themselves as Orthodox Christian, were unmarried, and claimed to have had little or no sexuality education growing up. The lead teacher (female) and her male support teacher often took it in turn to facilitate the lessons, although occasionally did so together.

As facilitators, teachers took on a supportive rather than a leading role in the classroom; setting up activities, answering questions and encouraging discussion. Their approach towards students was seen to be informal and friendly. They reported this to be a conscious departure from their usual teaching style, and attributed it to the WSWM trainings they had received;

“I think I do get a lot of information from the previous training. On how to facilitate, on how to distinguish between teaching and facilitating. In the [biology] class, I am a real teacher, I am too much serious. Outside the class, when I am giving a [WSWM] training, I have to act as a facilitator, just tolerate all things. They do not even recognise my behaviour” (WSWM teacher, M).

Observations showed teachers to approach all topics in a confident and relaxed manner. The teachers claimed to enjoy the classes, and not to feel embarrassed to talk about sensitive issues. Several times teachers were heard encouraging their students to ‘talk out’ and ‘not to be shy.’ Unlike morality, or health-based approached to SHE, sexuality was spoken of as something broad, natural and an important and enjoyable part of life. Teachers were particularly encouraging of female students, ensuring that they participated equally in class. This demonstrates a further break from previous studies that revealed female students to be overlooked or even chastised in SSA classrooms (Francis 2010, Magno 2007, Mirembe & Davies 2001, Smith and Harrison 2013). Indeed, WSWM teachers reported that gender equality was very important to them, to the programme and also to the development of the country.
A focus of pre-programme training, teachers were also seen to make an effort to separate fact from personal opinion\(^5\). To an extent, this effort was observed to be successful. During a class on drugs for example, rather than adopting an alarmist approach, teachers and students entered into more in-depth discussions. Different substances were discussed, their legality or illegality in Ethiopia, their effects – long term and short term, reasons that people take them, and ways to avoid them (see figure 7). Although not all classes were observed, teachers claimed they approached all topics in this way, including masturbation and homosexuality, some of the most culturally sensitive issues in the programme.

“I could decide not to tell them about masturbation, homosexuality and stuff like that but at the same time, nowadays, they can go themselves on the internet and see about this stuff, or watch movies, so they can see stuff in that way, and then they might try it. So my job is educating them and telling them about the facts, my job is not to tell them it is good or bad but the facts so they can decide what is right for them...” (WSWM teacher, F)

However, separating fact from opinion when the subject matter is so value-laden is a difficult task. Indeed, as will be discussed in the next chapter, whilst these most culturally sensitive issues were not ignored, there is evidence that personal opinion was a modifying factor, regarding what messages were prioritised, and how these messages were conveyed and received.

---

\(^{5}\) A ‘fact’ is defined by the programme as something with scientific evidence. This may be considered a Western interpretation.
These practices seem particularly striking when compared to non-CSE teachers in the school, many of who claimed would not discuss issues of puberty or sexuality with students, largely through fear of how they would react (see Chapter 6). Whereas WSWM teachers did consider this reaction, and even noticed it in the early days of the programme (reporting that some students were embarrassed to see them around school following a lesson), it does not appear to have affected their confidence or ability to implement the programme.

Despite an open approach, both teachers acknowledged this was not the cultural norm; that speaking openly about sexuality in Ethiopia is difficult and rarely done. Both claimed they had been reluctant to discuss SRHR in the past; that the culture they grew up in did not encourage it, and they were not given any detailed information either in school, or in the home. They attributed this change in them, partly to maturing through age, but predominately to the pre-programme training they had received;

“Gradually, when I finish my school, I talk with my friends... through life, I am able to do this better. And I take also training and workshops and so on. So because of these, we are not shy. I am free, I am very free, I am not afraid, I am not ashamed or embarrassed” (WSWM teacher, F)

5.1.2 WSWM Students
As reported, all students were seen to participate in classes, with no reluctance and little embarrassment. Those interviewed reported to enjoy the lessons, especially their relaxed feel and participatory nature. Like their teachers, there was evidence of students breaking cultural taboos and freely discussing sexuality.

These observations were reinforced by student accounts of their own involvement. All stated that they participated in some way, even presenting in front of the whole group, something that said was too daunting before the programme. However, the majority of students also admitted that participation was sometimes a little difficult, as this was not the culture in which they had been raised. The lesson regularly cited as the most difficult in this respect, was one about body changes. Despite this, students reported learning a lot from the lesson, and pushing themselves to participate, as they believed it important to do so, and were encouraged by teachers, and their more confident peers.

Yet, it was not only open discussion that was observed, but positive discussion. Like their teachers, students spoke of puberty and sexuality as natural, and not to be ashamed of. Further, they often mentioned the importance of love, and spoke about it in terms of happiness, communication and shared responsibility between partners. This is a significant and positive departure from previous findings which showed the overwhelmingly negative and problem-based messages delivered by morality and health-based approaches to SHE (Braeken 2008, Goldman, 2012). Also like their teachers, during interviews several students (male and female) reported gender equality to be one the most important lessons of the programme. Indeed, male students seemed particularly motivated by this lesson, some
claiming to have told friends and family that household jobs should be shared equally, and to also want to educate those in more rural areas, where they considered inequality to be at its greatest.

The vast majority of students attributed their ability to participate to classroom dynamics. Primarily, to the open, relaxed and encouraging approach of their teachers, but also partly to the participation of their fellow students, and the trust that personal information would remain in the classroom. Several students also said they would approach their WSWM teachers if they had problems (corroborated by teacher reports that students had done so on several occasions). This enabled students to participate even during ‘difficult’ lessons such as ‘body changes’.

It seems however, that this ability to participate took time to develop. Both teacher and student accounts reveal how in the first few classes, discussion and participation was limited. This is attributed to the fact that open discussion of sensitive issues is not usual in Ethiopian culture, and that students were still getting to know their teachers and fellow students. This may also explain why some students dropped out early in the programme. A small number of students however, claimed they had grown up with the confidence to talk openly, even about issues of sexuality. This was attributed to their parents, as will be discussed shortly. In these cases, the WSWM programme and the approach of the teachers gave them the space to exercise this confidence in class.

5.1.3 Gender Differences in WSWM Lessons

There was no difference, observed or reported, between the male and female teacher’s approach in the classroom, and in their ability to discuss sensitive issues. Similarly, no differences were observed in the way male and female students participated, or indeed, expressed their ease in participating. The majority claimed that they were able to discuss all topics, and had developed the confidence to talk to both same and opposite-sex peers. However, the majority did state a same-sex preference when it came to discussing sensitive issues with teachers. This was especially true regarding ‘body changes’; reporting that it was easier to discuss such things with a teacher ‘who is the same as me’. However, in all cases this preference was only slight, claiming they could talk with both teachers comfortably.

Some differences were observed during student interviews however. Only male students spoke about the ‘urges’ they experienced as adolescents. Further, male students were considerably more likely to bring up the most sensitive topics of the programme, such as homosexuality and masturbation. Whereas no female student mentioned the latter, a small number of male students did talk about it, and in a positive way – as a natural part of sexuality.

Moreover, some difference was seen in perceived participation ability of male and female students. Several male students and one WSWM teacher (female), considered it harder for girls to take part in the lessons, as they are not so exposed to such talk;
“It is more difficult for the girls. Mainly, in the society, the girls after school, they stay home and help their mother, so what they hear in the class is new for them, but the boys go outside and play football, so they are able to hear stuff. If a girl starts talking, there would be a shock – from where has this girl heard this kind of thing, where has she been?” (WSWM teacher, F)

This shows an understanding of the way that culturally-embedded gender roles might manifest themselves. Yet no female student reported feeling it was harder for her than for her male counterparts to discuss issues of sexuality and participate in the classes. Arguably, this shows that attempts made by teachers to address gender inequality were successful. This was not only through encouragement, but though seeing a female teacher lead by example. Supportive of this, is that whereas male students spoke about the influence of their WSWM teachers more generally, some female students explicitly named their female teacher as a source of inspiration and courage;

“We have acted about things in class – we acted about body change, so we know in detail what it is and we have been taught we should be honest and talk without being embarrassed, ashamed or scared. So I tell my friends and I tell them in details, the same as [f WSWM teacher] taught us in details. We learn here not to be afraid about it and it is the correct thing what we are learning, so I am taking the courage with my friends as [f WSWM teacher] does with us” (WSWM student, f).

5.2 WSWM Outside the Classroom
Implementation however is not restricted to the classroom. Indeed, one key aim of the programme is to encourage discussion of its topics, and the dissemination of factually-correct information outside of the classroom. Findings show that to an extent, this has been achieved.

5.2.1 Discussion with Friends
Almost all WSWM students claimed they spoke with friends about issues raised in the programme. This included discussion with fellow WSWM students outside of class hours, but more often, discussion with those not involved in the programme. Students claimed that their friends were the easiest people to talk; being the same age and going through similar experiences. Whereas most claimed they were comfortable talking to opposite-sex WSWM peers, due to the close relationship they had developed, same-sex preference was often expressed when talking to friends outside of the programme.

The nature of these discussions can be separated into two categories. First, general discussions; where information was given, but not in detail. If sexuality was discussed, it was problem-based, and advice was given solely in terms of abstinence. If students believed friends to be sexually active, this advice was then reported to shift to ‘being safe’. Second, those who spoke in detail. This included discussion about; sexuality, body changes, the names of sexual and reproductive organs, and relationships and sex. These students were
more likely to discuss the positives as well as the negatives of sexuality with their friends, and use phrases like ‘it is natural’ and ‘we shouldn’t be embarrassed.’ These students were also more likely to give more specific and tailored advice:

“I have friends in my village. Some have girlfriends, some have sex and others do not. I tell those who have girlfriends to continue this thing in a proper way, in a careful way. And the people who have not girlfriend and have not sex, I tell them that they must choose the right person. When you get girlfriend and when you have sex, this must be in a careful way. Because some have the wrong idea on this condom, and to be faithful with girlfriend. For example, people have not a positive idea for using condom, as they don’t learn about this. So, by making open discussion with people who have negative ideas on these things, I try and change it” (WSWM student, M).

Over half of the students interviewed fell into this first group. There seems to be little gender difference between the two groups, with both male and female students found in each. Students in the first category often said it was difficult to talk in detail, as although they had received the classes, their friends had not, so they might be embarrassed to hear about these things:

“I wouldn’t talk about private parts and things like that – I tell them to protect themselves and about self-confidence. But, they do not learn WSWM so they are shy. So we talk slightly, but not more” (WSWM, F).

Those in the second category also recognised that their friends might be embarrassed. However, these students believed it was important information and that it should be discussed regardless. Further, they reported that this became easier, the more it was done;

“Even though they are embarrassed, I am honest, and with my self-confidence I continue and tell, and the more I do this, the easier it gets” (WSWM student, F).

5.2.2 Discussion with Family
Discussion with family members also differed between students. All claimed their parents or care-givers knew they attended WSWM classes, and the majority claimed to discuss the programme with family members. However, the nature of these discussions varied. Some students described discussions as two-way; with parents encouraging them to talk about what they had learnt. The majority however, reported discussions to be less engaged, and in more general terms; “I told them we learnt about HIV, and about gender and culture” (WSWM student, M).

A third, smaller group, claimed that they never discussed any of the topics covered in the programme with their families. One student claimed that she thought neither her parents nor siblings would be interested to listen and discuss with her.

When asked to consider why they were able to talk openly or not to parents or care-givers, overwhelmingly, students put this down to the education level of their parents. Those who claimed to have detailed conversations with parents, said they could do so because their
parents were educated; they knew about the issues affecting adolescents, and they knew the importance of discussing them. Similarly, those who did not talk openly, said it was due to a lack of parental education; their parents did not understand such things or appreciate their value and therefore, trying to explain would be difficult. Some also said it was because their parents worked late, and didn’t have time to sit down and talk. Several of these students however, said they would talk to older siblings, who were similar in age and who also had received an education – making discussion easier.

Interestingly, those who reported being able to talk more openly and in detail with parents, were largely the same students who spoke to their friends in greater detail. This reflects the great influence of household factors on student abilities.

5.4 Concluding Remarks

Both observations and reported behavior show that the WSWM teachers and students have been able to implement a sexuality education programme in an environment where discussion of sex is regarded taboo. All were seen to participate in the classroom, regardless of individual characteristics such as age, sex and religion. In the classroom, this ability appears teacher-driven. WSWM teachers could discuss sensitive topics because of the training they received; students could because of the openness and encouragement of their teachers. For the few, more confident students, it seems that an invitation for open discussion was enough. For the majority of students however, confidence to participate and trust in their teachers, peers and WSWM, took a few lessons to develop.

However, we must also consider whether training alone would be enough to achieve these results. Indeed, given that the teachers were selected for the programme based on certain criteria (including their dedication to students, and being approachable, inclusive and encouraging) they might well have been predisposed to be able to act outside of cultural norms. Similarly, the students joined the programme voluntarily, and as classes take place after school, motivation and the priority given to education is important. These may therefore, be students who prioritise learning and are more open to new ideas.

The lack of gender differences in term of how student participation and treatment in the classroom seems a positive finding. This may reflect a general pattern of increasing gender equality in Ethiopian society; several respondents throughout the study thought this to be the case in Addis Ababa especially. More likely (given upcoming discussion) it reflects that attempts by teachers to address inequality were successful. Gender norms may still be prevalent, but encouragement and seeing that a woman is able to shirk these expectations, gives female students the confidence to do the same.

The fact that students are able to discuss SRHR topics outside of class also demonstrates a departure from the cultural norm, especially when this discussion is with parents. In the case of students who have not been brought up in an environment of open discussion, WSWM and its teachers have given them the confidence to talk, albeit often in only general terms. In the case of those few students who grew up in more open and educated households, the programme has reinforced these values and given them the
knowledge and interest to transmit programme information in some detail to friends and family. For all students therefore, the programme was seen to have a positive or ‘thickening’ effect on agency.

By all accounts therefore, we can see clear positive effects of the WSWM programme on both teachers and students. By incorporating an intensive training period for teachers into the programme, and ensuring that student participation is a defining feature, both WSWM teachers and WSWM design, encourages students out of their comfort zone, to talk about culturally-sensitive issues. However, as hinted earlier in the chapter, implementation was not impervious to the cultural context. As will be discussed next, the way in which certain aspects of the programme were interpreted and discussed, reveals the influence of dominating norms and values.
Chapter 6 – How and to what Extent does Cultural Context Affect Programme Implementation?

Building on from previous discussions, this chapter focuses on the way in which implementation was affected by the cultural; the prevailing norms that form Ethiopian culture and the values of the local community, and shape how information in the programme is understood and used. It will show that the cultural context did have a modifying effect, with programme messages being brought more in line with culturally accepted messages. Further, it will argue that both teachers and students played an equal role in this modification process, yet it was not always a conscious role, rather something that sometimes happened at a deeper level, and should be framed within a structural setting. The chapter begins by explaining how, through enactment, curriculum deviated from its original form. It then discusses reasons for these modifications, by further exploring the cultural context in which teachers and students operate, through the views of other actors. Finally, it discusses how students reconcile the different messages given to them, and how this might affect the way they implement programme lessons.

6.1: Messages & Modifications in the Classroom

As previously described, WSWM provides teachers with a comprehensive programme manual and students with structured, interactive, computer-based information. Within this system, there seems little room for modification; certainly not curriculum change or development as described by Shawer (2010). However, what is of interest to this study, is programme modification; the extent to which lesson plans were adhered to, and moreover, how information was interpreted, discussed and internalised by the teachers and students throughout the process of curriculum enactment.

Findings show that programme modifications can be categorised in two main ways. Firstly, as a result of a divergence between programme requirements, and local capacities (including available resources). Secondly, as a result of cultural factors. It is the second categorisation particularly with which this study is interested, however, it is also important to explain and understand the first, as it has an important bearing on the implementing environment.

6.1.1 Issues of Capacity

The biggest barriers to the programme, as both observed and reported by teachers and students, were issues of time-keeping and computer-maintenance. During the lessons that were observed, there were several computers that were not functioning. At one point, fewer than the half of the computers in the room were useable. This resulted in groups of up to nine students per computer. Some students mentioned this as an issue during interviews, yet all said they worked together and ensured the involvement of the whole group. Observations confirmed this, as explained in the previous chapter, all students participated actively in the classes. However, the quality of learning must be considered
Large groups mean that a student’s ability and the time available to them to navigate and interactive with the online lesson was considerably reduced.

As noted, time keeping was also a modifying factor. This was flagged up as a considerable concern by teachers. Lessons were claimed to take significantly longer to complete than the time allocated in lesson plans. This was attributed to the large number of presentation slides for each lesson, as well as language issues; English often being students’ third or fourth language in Ethiopia, and not prioritised in state schooling. This resulted in large disparities in students’ English abilities. Indeed these issues were observed first-hand, with students often taking the majority of the lesson to navigate through, and make sense of the information before them. Whilst this may not be an issue on its own, it had a considerable effect on lessons. Apportioning slides, as described earlier, jeopardised the students’ comprehensive understanding of the lesson. Similarly, time concerns meant that new information was not discussed by the group and fully explained by the teachers. Finally, there was often insufficient time remaining after these presentations to conduct off-screen clarifying and behaviour-reinforcing exercises.

Of more interest to this study, are the modifications that can be attributed to the cultural setting. Changes were often subtle, yet caused programme messages to deviate. The most striking of these were; a neglect of the most sensitive issues, heteronormativity (sex defined purely in heterosexual terms and homosexuality only as problematic), adolescent sex as unacceptable, and persisting (unequal) gender norms.

6.1.2 A Neglect of the Most Sensitive Issues & Heteronormativity

These first two stem from similar beliefs and will therefore be discussed together. Almost all discussions, both observed and partaken, were absent of those issues regarded the most culturally-sensitive; homosexuality and masturbation. These issues that are largely considered to be unnatural and harmful both to the individual and to society; a threat to traditional values, especially marriage and the continuation of a generation. These topics were part of a class that was unfortunately not observed. Classes that were observed however, were often seen to lack clarifying discussions. This may have been due to time issues, to teachers’ and students’ unease with certain topics, or a mixture of the two.

Further, except one male WSWM student, no teacher or student raised these issues during interviews or other discussions. Neither were they mentioned in the ‘top tip’ books. Also, very few students reported talking about these issues with friends or family. As mentioned in Chapter 5, of those who did, the majority were male (no female student said she would talk about masturbation), and the bulk of conversations purported to take place with friends. A small number of male students said they would discuss such things with older brothers, but none with parents.

This unease with such issues, and their lack of discussion, brings us to the way in which sexuality was discussed; as heterosexual, and when directly asked about homosexuality; as
unknown or as a problem. Regarding the first point, despite the fact that the WSWM curriculum never describes it as such, it seemed sex was automatically equated to a male and female partnership, by both teachers and students. This also came through when reviewing the students’ ‘top tip books’.

Regarding the second point, when the students were specifically asked what they knew of homosexuality, responses varied. Several students could not remember the lesson, and thought they were perhaps absent. Two recalled hearing the term, but were not able to explain what it meant. Another two students said they remembered the lesson, but found talking about it at the time rather uncomfortable;

“In the homosexuality lesson, even though they were teaching it, we didn’t have that much discussion about it. People were shy – it doesn’t feel nice to talk about that kind of topic” (WSWM student, m).

Other students claimed that they had no problem with the lesson, although did not go into detail about what they had learnt. These mixed and sometimes confused responses further suggest that sensitive issues were only treated superficially – not being discussed in any length or depth. Interestingly, despite different memories of the lesson, all students held the same view; it was important, as it raised awareness and helped them and others to protect themselves against it. Several students thought that it happened mainly within uneducated communities. This problem-focus may have been teacher-initiated; ‘it has to be a part of the training, because the problem exists in our country, whether we like it or not it exists’ (WSWM teacher, m) but equally (especially as even those who did not remember the lesson felt the same), this view might have pre-existed. Therefore, whilst the previous chapter showed a reported willingness from WSWM teachers to discuss sensitive, and to separate fact from opinion whilst doing so, the extent to which this was executed is debateable.

“...So my job is educating them and telling them about the facts, my job is not to tell them it is good or bad but the facts so they can decide what is right for them. I will tell them what the society thinks, what is the law about it, what is the religious view about it - so it is not good, and what are the facts - say only 1 or 2% in Ethiopia might do it, but I don’t see it.”

Indeed, facts may well have framed the lesson, but as seen above, these facts seem to be selective, value-laden, and perhaps incorrect.6 Local studies for example, reveal homosexual practice to be higher, at around 7% (Dingeta 2012, Mengesta & Birhane 2009). To a degree, this supports Rogow’s (2005) perception, that (for teachers), ‘lessons on social attitudes towards homosexuality maybe more comfortable and appropriate than lessons on homosexuality per se’ (p339), yet also shows that the two are not necessarily separable.

---

6 It may be argued that the ‘facts’ included in the programme are themselves selected based on Dutch values. An in-depth discussion into this is beyond the scope of the study, suffice to say that a critical position should always be adopted when using such terms.
6.1.3 Enforced Adolescent Abstinence

Another divergence between the written programme and received and discussed messages, was the prioritisation and naturalisation of abstinence, and a problem-based focus of adolescent sex. This was seen during observation, and in interviews with both teachers and students. Teachers would often be heard saying such things as ‘but you are students so you now abstain.’

“"The first major thing we teach is about abstaining. If they are really not able to abstain – the older students, around 18-20, if they want to have sex then we tell them to use a condom, because if you don’t, what could happen to you? You could have STDs, HIV, unwanted pregnancy, and if you are a girl you are not able to study for a couple of years and you get older. And also this could be hard for your family, so of course we tell them what could happen” (WSWM teacher, F).

This not only reflects the main message of abstinence, but shows there is not even a consideration that students under-18 might be sexually active. Arguably, this reflects a naïve view of the adolescent (Braeken et al, 2008). Yet interviews revealed an acceptance that some students outside of the programme perhaps were sexually active, suggesting this protectionist view does not extend to all students, possibly just to those who teachers have become particularly close to through WSWM. A further argument, as will be discussed later, is the type of student attending WSWM may be the type who is less likely to be sexually active.

With students, this view was reflected in several ways. Problem-avoidance was often given as a key reason for joining the programme; ‘to learn more about things like HIV/AIDS and how to protect myself.’ This perhaps predisposed students to prioritise certain messages. This was further substantiated when they were asked what information they passed on to their friends. In the majority of cases, the answer was; ‘to be safe and not to have sex because of the problems it may cause.’

Therefore, whilst sexuality and sexual relationships were discussed as natural and enjoyable, as shown in Chapter 5, this was only in respect to the future; it may be natural, but not at this stage of life. This positive message was thus usurped by one considered more immediate; do not have sex now – it will bring many problems. In this way, the programme became more aligned with a health or morality-based, rather than a CSE approach; with a clearly ordered preference of sexual behaviour (ABC) based on cultural values. Thus, CSE’s aim to support youth in making their own decisions, based on fact-based information, was negated.

6.1.4 Persisting Gender Norms

Tackling gender inequality is a key goal of WSWM, and as seen in Chapter 5, was also prioritised by WSWM teachers and students. Yet despite seemingly transformational attitudes and practices, on some levels gender norms were seen to persist. This was observed during one class on sexual harassment and abuse, a description of which was
provided in the previous chapter. Programme messages included that sexual abuse is not just limited to women and girls. However, when the class performed role-plays to demonstrate refusal skills, all plays featured a female student being harassed by a male. Although students were not explicitly told their plays should take this form, teachers were seen to rearrange groups to ensure that all were mixed sex.

Further, this class also included the message that abuse and harassment is never the victim’s fault. When discussion turned to sexual harassment during focus group discussions however, several students (the vast majority male), expressed the view that girls were partly to blame – as wearing short skirts and make-up encourages males.

These examples illustrate the deeply-entrenched norms concerning gender and power relations, existent in both teachers and students. Despite the role-play having the intention of upsetting these norms, in many ways is also reinforced them; the male as the aggressor, the female as the protector of her ‘value’, and all sexual advances as heterosexual. Similarly, the second example reflects the way in which messages from the class have been interpreted by some students. This interpretation perpetuates certain norms; men as aggressors, with urges and sexual entitlement.

6.2: Messages beyond the Classroom
These findings demonstrate the main ways in which curriculum was modified through teacher-student interpretation and discussion of programme material. As shown, a focus on certain issues and messages and a neglect of others, shapes what students prioritise, remember, and pass on to others. At times, this is seen to come from teachers; ‘you are now students so you abstain.’ Certainly, teacher influence is an important factor in how students interpret the programme. Yet we must look beyond this. Reasons for these interpretations are more complex and nuanced, and reflect deeper ways in which both teachers and students internalise information. This is shaped both directly and indirectly by the cultural setting in which they find themselves. It is to this that we now turn.

6.2.1 Influence at the School Level
Past research has shown that the school environment can be key in understanding programme modifications; lack of support from those outside the programme, and beliefs and practices that directly contradict programme messages (Goldman et al 2013, Mirembe and Davis 2001).

Regarding support, in-school interviews revealed support for the programme without exception. Explored further however, it emerged that other than WSWM teachers, no member of staff knew about the programme in detail. Whilst students spoke about the programme to others, it seems WSWM teachers did not, certainly at least not to colleagues – even those running similar out-of-school programmes (there was reported to be a ‘gender club’ and an ‘HIV club’ in the school). Therefore, the effect of pre-programme training, which enabled teachers to break taboos and discuss sexuality, stayed within the parameters of the classroom. An account from a teacher not involved with WSWM, but concerned
about male student-female student harassment in the school, further suggests that there is not a culture of such discussion amongst teachers;

“We will meet together, but well, to tell you the truth, we don’t talk around this topic [harassment]. When we meet, we talk about our lesson. We talk only about our subject area. I will try now, if they will listen” (non-WSWM teacher, F).

When non-WSWM teachers were asked whether the more sensitive issues should be part of the programme (with examples given of homosexuality and masturbation), several thought they should not;

“The social norms will not accept such things about masturbation, homosexuality, like this. I may discuss these things with my friends, with people whom I know but I will not raise this idea in front of my students... If I say something about these things, they may consider it as something morally wrong. I don’t think it is important to talk about this” (non-WSWM teacher, m).

Further, several teachers were unsure about the depth of information that should be provided. All held that students should be taught to abstain, yet most conceded that not all do. As such, they believed that some education about contraceptives should be given, yet only for sexually active students, so as not to encourage others.

Regarding practices and values that contradicted the programme, heteronormativity rang throughout the school (as reflected in the above quote), opposing the ‘rights and respect regardless’ nature of CSE. Echoing those student beliefs presented earlier, two male non-CSE teachers also spoke about female students as a ‘distraction’, and usually the ones to blame for the poor behaviour of male students. Indeed, although not a focus of this study, previous research carried out in the same school, revealed that female students at times felt over-looked in class, and unfairly treated compared to their male peers (Le Mat, 2013). More worryingly, this research also corroborates concerns raised by several teachers about teacher-student sexual harassment and abuse in the school. A number of female students also gave accounts of friends who had been propositioned.

Evidenced therefore, were Mirembe & Davis’ (2001) ‘four forms of control’ being exercised in the school; gendered discipline patterns (in the way gender norms result in the unequal treatment of students) sexual harassment, compulsory heterosexuality and hegemonic masculinity (in the persisting idea of men as aggressors with uncontrollable urges). This study adds a fifth; enforced adolescence abstinence. All of these practices contradict programme teachings.

The role of the student in these practices should not be neglected. Indeed, findings show that a perceived negative student reaction is reported to be a major deterrent for teachers to discuss SRHR issues. Several reported worrying that their students would lose trust and respect for them if they discussed certain things;
You know, last year, I taught grade 8 students, and once I said that was I teaching about reproductive systems, and in the society locally we have a word that we used to call the female parts, but saying so is bad in front of the students because they accept you, they respect you. If you say the words which are related to these things, they will be embarrassed. They feel that they lack trust upon you, because you have used this word.” (non-WSWM teacher, M)

The above quote shows the modifying effect of perceived sensitivities on lessons. The teacher claimed to only use the English terms for sexual and reproductive organs, as he felt that these were less sensitive. Partly, this worry seems to stem from teachers’ own experiences, when they themselves were students. Two teachers described the after-effect of such a lesson. One claimed that following this lesson, her and her friends would hide their faces in shame when they saw this teacher around the school. The other, that fellow students began calling the teacher names behind his back, and no longer considered him respectable.

Indeed, as described earlier, WSWM teachers did report an element of this behaviour when the programme first began. However, there were no reports from either side that students lost trust or respect for their teachers, and both claimed that embarrassment subsided as classes progressed. Unfortunately, as students who left the programme during its early stages were inaccessible, it is not known whether this contributed to drop-outs.

Interviews with students however (both those in and outside the programme) revealed a demand for more detailed SRH knowledge. Several felt that current information provided by their biology teachers was insufficient, and believed that this is due to a concern that such discussions are not socially acceptable.

“[In biology class] We just follow the text book, so we get the information. But this is not done in our society. There are younger students who might be embarrassed and then maybe the teacher gets embarrassed, so he doesn’t go into further details, just follows the textbook, so we know basic. But I think the students are happy to learn about it – some may be a little embarrassed, some not, but it is important” (non-WSWM student, m).

Establishing the source of this reluctance may be a somewhat futile exercise. Rather, it is a reflection of broader cultural sensitivities, which both shape and are shaped by teacher and student sensitivities. What is important, and what affects learning, are perceptions of these sensitivities. Indeed, this may be a contributing factor to programme modifications; for example, not taking time to discuss and explain the most sensitive material.

6.2.2 Influence at the Household Level
Yet to fully understand the setting in which students operate, we must look beyond the school, to the household level. The key role that parents play in shaping students’ abilities to discuss sensitive issues has been shown in the previous chapter. This hints at the strong
influence of the home environment in shaping young people’s views, agency, and interpretation of the programme, as will now be discussed further.

Regardless of whether students came from an ‘open’ family, or one whose reservations meant they did not speak about sexuality, the messages that they received showed little variation; to abstain and to focus on studies, as relationships were something for the future.\(^7\) The dominance of this abstinence-based message may affect both knowledge and attitudes. With regard to the former, not one of the students reported speaking about any methods of protection other than abstinence, with their parents. One or two said they would talk about this with older siblings, but it seems that this was more in general than personal terms. However, despite this, all stakeholders believed young people in Addis Ababa had a good knowledge of contraceptives (through media, peer influence and out-of-school programmes like WSWM). This was confirmed in interviews with students, all of whom could list different methods of modern contraception.

More worrying therefore, is the effect that is had on attitudes and in turn, behaviors. An abstinence-based message shapes students’ understanding of what is and what is not socially acceptable behavior, with sexual relationships as an adolescent very much ‘not’. This may result in a fear of judgement and in turn, secretive and risky behaviour. Indeed, during interviews several students expressed worry that if they raised the issues of sexual health with their parents, they would be suspected of being sexually active. Further, only a small handful of students reported they would tell their parents if they were in a relationship. Even some of those who claimed they had an extremely open relationship with their parents, said they would not.

6.2.3 Influence at the Community/Societal Level
Placed in the broader setting of the community, we can better understand why household messages are so similar. Indeed, it seems that at this level, the view that adolescents should abstain from all sexual activity, dominates. This was reflected during an interview with a local Pastor;

“We have a regulation for marriage, if you want to be a married person in our church we have teachings for that. The first thing you tell them is no sex before marriage, so we will tell them that kind of stuff, and we will teach them, why we are saying that, why the bible is saying that type of stuff. If you have any sexual relationship before marriage, most people they don’t even enter to marry somebody because they already finished everything. The bible specifically tells about that kind of stuff as a sin, so they are disobeying God” (Pastor, m).

In a strongly religious country such as Ethiopia, the religious message holds great weight. Further, given that every student interviewed described themselves as religious\(^8\), and the Pastor claimed the majority of his 500 plus congregation were young people, the religious

\(^7\) Asked what constituted ‘the future’, just over half of the students said that this meant once married. Others, when they were at university, or when they were self-sufficient.

\(^8\) Either Protestant, Christian Orthodox, Christian (in one case), or Muslim.
influence on adolescents is no less strong. This influence comes through the multi-faceted role that religious leaders often play; as preachers, counsellors and advisors.

“They can trust me, they can easily talk to me, anything, if it happens in their life, they are so open and they can talk to me. Some people, even with their families they have some problems, sexually, morally… so I will discuss that type of stuff with them” (Pastor, m).

Yet, despite the weight of this message is one that is also very traditional, and perhaps misaligned with the lived realities of members of the congregation.

This traditional view resonates throughout Ethiopian society, even it seems, affecting those working within sexual health. The school’s counsellor, for example, explained that if a student came to her with an SRHR issue, she would always tell them to abstain. Only if they absolutely could not would she tell them to make use of contraceptives, yet one must question the number of students who would articulate their absolute inability to abstain in such an environment.

Similarly, several SRHR experts expressed concern about the lack of youth-friendly services available nationwide.

“There are a lot of harassment and a lot of insults, so they are not youth friendly… For those girls who are not married, who are teenagers, there are a lot of insults. For those who are already in marriage, they cannot say something. For those people, the thinking is, it is up to them to enjoy sex, but the others – they should not go for sex because they are not married. That is the thinking behind it” (SRHR expert, m),

The location of services is also a concern, as explained by one WSWM teacher;

“I don’t think that if a girl has any kind of problem she would go there [to the central clinic] as it’s so close. They want to go somewhere further, where no one knows, or sees them going there as people will start talking about it” (WSWM teacher, F).

Therefore, although efforts have been made to increase ease of access to contraceptives and healthcare to young people, there is a concern that an unfriendly approach and judgemental attitudes restrict access, as seen in previous Ethiopian-based studies (Govindasamy 2002, Tilahun 2012).

Talking to a variety of actors, influential in the lives of young people, we see a clear consistency in the message they are giving out; as an adolescent, you should abstain. Variation only comes in the accoutrements of this message; when is it acceptable to have a sexual relationship, and whether or not to accept that some young people may have sex regardless, and teach them how to do it safely.

6.3 The Extent of Influence

With these findings in mind, it will now be considered to what extent the cultural context has been seen to affect implementation, not only in the classroom, but more broadly.
Regarding the knowledge of teachers and students, the cultural setting appears to have a relatively limited effect. Teachers seemed well informed, and in interviews and ‘top tip’ books, almost all students gave accurate explanations about forms of contraception, puberty, reproduction, and the nature of sexuality.

More affected, are the values and attitudes surrounding this information, and therefore, the way in which programme messages are interpreted and acted upon. A reflection of these values may even be seen in students’ reported behaviour; – not one claimed to be sexually active. Even older students, aged 18, said they would wait. In part, this may display a conservative Ethiopian culture, where adolescent pre-marital sex is still relatively low. However, it may also reflect culturally pleasing responses; showing that the message of abstinence still dominates as the ‘right’ thing. Indeed, a few WSWM students claimed to be in, or to have previously been in relationships, and furthermore, around half said they knew people their age who had been sexually active. Whether all students were abstaining or not, responses reflect a student belief that adolescent sex is wrong.

Similarly, the chapter has also shown other cultural values, so embedded they remain untouched, and affect how information is interpreted. Heteronormativity for example, or the harassment role-play, that upset some gender norms, but reinforced others. These findings suggest a stratified nature to norms and values. Those closer to the surface were challenged; yet others are so deep, they were not even acknowledged. They also reflect a tendency towards convergence; teachers and students discussing information in a way that brings it closer towards what is deemed culturally acceptable.

Concerning whether student abilities to implement programme information are hampered, of key importance is the way that such values are reconciled with WSWM teachings. If there is a gap between the two, students may feel ashamed to act on information about safe sex for example. This is a concern, given student admission that they would not inform parents if in a relationship; possibly leading to ‘snatched’ and risky encounters. Similarly, they may be unwilling to use SRHR services, through fear of being seen, or judged.

When asked, if they considered ‘outside’ messages to be the same as WSWM messages, responses were divided. Some students regarded them as the same; to avoid bad things, and concentrate on studies. Others believed that teachings did differ slightly, but that there was no conflict between the two;

“I don’t think there is a conflict. What is in the bible is written and the programme is more about practice. I can combine it – this is more of what is happening around us, so it helps us to understand what is going on” (WSWM student, f).

---

9 EDHS 2011, found only 7% of girls with secondary education or higher had sexual intercourse in the four weeks prior to the survey.
Finally, a small number of students saw a clear difference between programme and external messages; WSWM shows there are choices (contraceptives), whereas religious and parental messages focus only on abstinence. Despite this, these students still perceived such information as important, as they could pass it on to others;

Respondent: “I hear these messages, I don’t reject them. But because of my, self-religion, I don’t practise that. For example, the lesson says, use condom, but the religion, it rejects it. Condom is not important in our religion. So I learn that, but I don’t practise that.”

Interviewer: “But you said you talk to your friends, what message do you pass onto them?”

Respondent: “If they have sex, I tell them to use condom. That is important” (WSWM student, m).

Encouragingly, these findings show an ability to settle personal beliefs with programme messages. Further, even those who could not would still pass on information to their friends, showing the value that students place on informing over imposing beliefs. Finally, despite concerns from some stakeholders, students reported that they believed their peers knew where to buy condoms and further, that most were not afraid to do so.

6.4 Concluding Remarks
This chapter has shown that cultural context had an effect on programme implementation. The views of various influential actors reveal the dominant views and norms of the society. Teachers and students are operating within this context, suggesting why programme modifications may have occurred. In this way, implementation is affected by the cultural context both directly; shaping teachers’ and students’ own norms and values, and indirectly; shaping the norms and values of those around them. This in turn affects their interpretations of WSWM material. Further, findings show that teachers and students reinforce and ‘naturalise’ each other’s interpretations in the classroom setting, exacerbated by capacity issues, most notably time concerns, that suppresses any discussions that there might have been about such interpretations.

At the school level, although WSWM may have enabled those teachers and students involved to break certain taboos and question certain norms and values, these trainings were not extended to others. Therefore, the school setting was not transformed (findings revealed somewhat traditional views in terms of sexuality education and gender norms as well as the existence of practices which directly contradict programme teachings). This results in confusing and conflicting messages, and an environment in which the teachers and students of the programme may feel judged or persecuted should they sway from these norms (arguably evidenced in teachers not discussing the programme with colleagues). This is also true outside the school setting, where a dominance of messages of abstinence is reflected everywhere; from the home, to the church, even in health services.
Students who are better able to reconcile external messages with programme messages may be better able to act on the information available to them (worrying less that they will defy the values with which they have been brought up). Indeed, in the last chapter especially, we have seen changes brought about by the programme, both in terms of knowledge and attitudes (questioning norms regarding gender and sexuality). These changes are significant, reflect a transformation in both teachers and students, and should not be forgotten in a preoccupation with structural constraints. Culture certainly is not all-restraining, rather has had a more subtle modifying effect on implementation; through the way in which messages are interpreted, the depths that new attitudes reach, and how students have chosen to use the information from the programme. Yet, also affecting implementation is the importance and respect stakeholders attach to the programme. Arguably, a lack of esteem will reduce teacher and student motivation, especially if implementation is seen as a struggle amidst an unfavourable environment. It is these issues that that will now be addressed in Chapter 7.
Chapter 7 – Need, Relevance and Quality

So far, this thesis has examined how a CSE programme has been implemented, and the effects of cultural context on this. What has not been considered is whether there is a perceived need for the programme, and further, whether the programme is viewed as adequately relevant and well-designed to meet these needs. Not only will a perceived lack of relevance and quality surely affect implementation, but more importantly it begs the question – why bother? This chapter aims to explore this, by considering the viewpoints of various stakeholders. It will define what is meant by relevance and quality before considering how these aspects are perceived; firstly by WSWM students, secondly by other stakeholders involved with implementation. Following this, the views of stakeholders not attached to WSWM will be presented, including the need for SHE, and the form that it should take. Finally, perceptions of the main SRHR issues affecting adolescents will be discussed and whether or not these issues are incorporated into the WSWM programme.

7.1 Defining Relevance and Quality

The aim of this study is not to conduct a formal evaluation of the WSWM programme. Rather, to take a more inductive approach; to better understand different actors’ perceptions of the SRHR needs of adolescents in Ethiopia and whether they consider CSE education an appropriate way of addressing these needs. More specifically, whether those involved in implementation considered the WSWM programme to address these needs. Therefore, the terms ‘relevance’ and ‘quality’ will be employed in a subjective way. Indeed, what a student considers important may differ from what their teacher considers important. Relevance will be measured in terms of whether stakeholders consider WSWM subject matter to address the main issues facing adolescents. Quality will be measured in terms of how this subject matter is delivered; whether information was presented in a clear and engaging way, and whether it was sufficient, inadequate or excessive.

7.2 Student Perceptions of Relevance and Quality

Given that WSWM’s goal is to positively impact the lives of adolescents, arguably the student opinion is the most valuable. Not one WSWM student interviewed directly criticised the programme, and only two offered any suggestions for improvement. This may show that students consider the programme to fully meet their needs, yet may also reflect pleasing responses. Arguably however, given that the programme is voluntary, dislike or disinterest would be reflected in drop-out rates. Further, observation of the classes and time spent around the students revealed a genuine enthusiasm for the programme, as this field diary extract from one of Group 2’s classes shows;

---

10 Although there were no formal figures, teachers thought about 1/5\textsuperscript{th} of the original number of students had dropped out of the programme. They attributed this to two main factors; several had moved away from the school, and some found the lessons too long, especially given the lack of refreshments in the first few lessons.
The group is laughing and there is friendly teasing between students and teachers. All appear relaxed and seem to be enjoying the class. At the end of the class, I am asked by the teacher whether I recognised two of the male students - they had attended the same class as part of group 1 earlier in the week.

Not only were there instances of students attending classes twice, but also students who reported to have joined the programme following recommendations from participating friends.

All students claimed the programme was important and relevant, yet justifications varied. They can be separated into three groups. A small group of students believed the information was important to them now, as they are in the ‘fire age’ (the stage at which adolescents experience new, sexual urges and ‘mood swings’ as a result of changing hormone levels). These students believed that during this period, they are exposed to, and more likely to submit to risky and dangerous behaviour. It is therefore essential to know how to ‘avoid temptation’, but also to know how to be safe should they, or their friends succumb. All in this group were male. The second (majority) group, considered programme information important for the future; helping them to stay safe when they leave school and are confronted with these issues. Finally a third, small group, did not attach personal importance to programme information, but did consider it to have social importance. That is; information about sexual health was not perceived as necessary for themselves as they did not believe in pre-marital sex, but would be passed onto others in their school and community. When asked whether they would need to know about contraception within marriage, these students did not appear to have given this much consideration. One – a female, responded that she may, in order to better plan the timing and spacing of her children. The other two (male), responded that their religion did not allow for the use of contraceptives. This reflects the (perceived) different needs of the sexes regarding SHE (Ahlberg et al 2001, Rijsdijk 2012), and perhaps at a deeper level, the belief that ‘women are expected to take responsibility for their own and men’s sexuality... and to maintain safety’ (Ahlberg 2001, p33).

As explained, the programme also contained the sensitive topics of homosexuality and masturbation, issues often considered ‘Western imports’. Stakeholders were therefore asked whether they were considered relevant enough to the Ethiopian setting to be included in the curriculum. All students considered them relevant. In terms of homosexuality; that awareness was needed to reduce the problem (see Chapter 6), in terms of masturbation, some male students claimed that this is a natural part of sexuality and therefore should be a part of the lesson (see Chapter 5).

As well as knowledge development, students also expressed programme relevance in terms of skills development. This included hard skills; English language and computer skills, as well as soft skills; self-confidence, open mindedness and planning for the future. The outcomes of this on students will be further discussed in the following chapter. Regarding relevance
however, students felt these skills were both relevant now – helping them with their studies (corroborated by reports from teachers), as well as key to future success (helping them to set, and work towards career goals).

Students also reported positively on programme quality. All claimed to enjoy the structure of the lessons; the fact that they were student-driven, computer-based, and group-focused, and the fun and interactive way in which information was presented. Several claimed that having the responsibility of their own learning meant they learnt more, and working with peers encouraged discussion and peer support. This support seemed particularly useful in helping with English, with some students claiming they would otherwise struggle. Many students said they especially enjoyed the group activities that followed the theory, such as role-plays, and some requested there be more of these activities. This may be more reflective of programme modifications due to time issues (see chapter 6) than of programme quality.

No student considered there to be information missing from the programme. Two however did request certain topics to be expanded. One, wanted more information on culture (his favourite lesson), both in terms of ‘negative culture’ (listed as HTPs) and ‘positive culture’ (listed as food, clothing and dancing). The other, believed the programme could be better contextualised to the implementation area. With an opposing view to his classmate, he argued that issues such as HTPs were not so relevant in the capital city, yet that problems of drug and alcohol abuse were considerable, and required more attention.

7.3 Implementing Stakeholders’ Perceptions of Relevance and Quality
In addition to students, other actors involved in implementation were asked their opinion regarding programme relevance and quality; to see if views differed and if so, to consider why. Actors in this group included WSWM teachers as well as representatives from two NGOs; one implementing NGO, the other involved with coordination. All of these actors knew the WSWM curriculum in detail.

Similar to students, these actors expressed great positivity towards the programme. This was rooted in the changes they saw in its students at an individual level (discussed in the following chapter), and in the belief that CSE, and WSWM specifically, could tackle the SRHR problems existent in Ethiopia.

Further, all considered every aspect of the programme to be relevant. WSWM teachers particularly, expressed that students needed to be well-informed on all issues, even those deemed culturally taboo. They explained this, arguing that students are exposed to such things regardless; through peers and the media, yet that information from these sources might be heavily biased or simply untrue. Therefore, ignoring these issues would not make them disappear, but may increase intrigue, and the likelihood of practice.

“Most of the students have already heard about the condoms, from media, from friends.. so it’s not like they haven’t heard before coming to this class. If you take sugar from in front of the child and hide it, he is going to try to find it because he gets more interested - why you
are hiding it? And it’s the same thing if you don’t tell all the facts about sex” (WSWM teacher, f).

One exception came from a programme officer from the implementing NGO, who reported feeling uncomfortable that homosexuality was in the curricula, attributing this to her religious beliefs and Ethiopia’s anti-gay laws. Despite this trepidation, she still expressed her full support for the programme.

Further, unlike stakeholders not directly linked to the programme, this group spoke not only of CSE’s benefit in terms of problem limitation, but of the wider and more intrinsic benefits it may have. Like its students, they considered the life-skills WSWM helped them to develop;

“It is one way of empowering young people. And if you empower young people you empower the nation. If young people learn to decide issues for themselves, starting from this time, then their whole life they can decide on important issues of their life and even of their society” (SRHR Programme Director from coordinating NGO, m).

This group also reported positively on programme quality; that it was delivered in an engaging way, and produced positive results. WSWM teachers however, did express some concern about the structure of the programme; predominately, the amount of time that it took to complete the slide presentations, with insufficient time left for activities (see chapter 6). One teacher believed this is because the programme was originally designed for the Kenyan and Ugandan context, where English is spoken much more widely.

“In Kenya and Uganda, English there is perfect, but in Ethiopia, it is not tongue langue, it is 3rd or 4th language like me, so the lesson takes time to understand for our students” (WSWM teacher, f).

7.4 Wider Perceptions of need for CSE
Remaining stakeholders (those without detailed knowledge of the WSWM programme) were asked about the need and importance of sexual health education, and the form that it should take (including the main messages it should contain, at what age it should start, and where it should take place). These stakeholders included non-CSE teachers, the school counsellor, representatives from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education, a representative from the Regional Education Bureau, and a local Pastor.

All expressed a need for sexual health education in Ethiopia. Further, all agreed that this should be school-based. However, unlike previous groups, need was solely justified in terms of problem-limitation, with no discussion of the positive aspects of sexuality or the broader affects CSE may have. This was true even of those working within SRHR. Although ministry officials expressed a need to develop life-skills as well as knowledge, these skills were only given instrumental value; as a tool with which to reduce problems.
“It is very important, for our country, for our students, when you see there are many problems with regards to sexualities. Most of the students involved are youngsters, so they are facing problems, mostly female students are a target – different research has revealed that. For example, at the first year when they joined university, they are exposed to pregnancy, unsafe sex, also some of them might be infected with HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, so it is very important... Most of the students knows about pregnancy, but when they join university they get pregnant and they drop out. So the problem is not the information but the practical use and the attitudinal change. So the current life skills programme is designed to tackle this.” (Representative from MoE, m)

Understanding the value of SHE in this way, influenced the shape that these actors envisaged it taking. Views expressing the age at which education should start, and the main messages that should be delivered varied, yet all were expressed within the confines of problem prevention. Opinions concerning age at commencement varied from elementary school age (around 10 years) to secondary school age (around 15 years). Differences can be seen between those working in the field of SRHR and those not. Actors who were not, believed that education should start during adolescence - when students start experiencing ‘urges’ (around 15). Actors who were, believed that, providing it was age-appropriate, it should begin pre-adolescence (around 10, 11 years). This difference perhaps can be attributed to the level of exposure to research, and global and expert opinion. However, interestingly, even those who believed that SHE should start later, considered their views progressive; “In my opinion, it should be talked about early, right from grade 10” (non-WSWM teacher, m). This may be unsurprising. As previously mentioned, apart from certain biological aspects covered in the national biology curriculum, no formal sex education is given in Ethiopia until the university level. Therefore, education starting at grade 10 (when students may be 15-18 years) would generally be considered early. Seen within this framework, both teachers and experts are pushing for a change of the current system. Yet the motivations behind this push, (whether, for example, it was to reinforce the morals of the society at an earlier age), must be considered...

All believed that the main message of sexuality education should be abstinence. This is perhaps to be expected, based on findings from previous chapters. As seen, it is not the main message that varies, but the appurtenances of the message; what information should surround it, and in what level of detail. Those working in the SRHR field, argued that given that research shows adolescent sex occurs regardless, the message of abstinence should be supplemented with information about contraception. In contrast to this, are those who believed no supplementary information should be given; adolescents who do have sex, should be informed about the dangers and guided back to abstinence (one non-WSWM teacher expressed this view, as did the Pastor). A third group consisted of those struggling to reconcile the reality of sexually active adolescents with their own values. This was predominately non-WSWM teachers. As mentioned in Chapter 6, they acceded that abstinence was not always possible, and therefore knowledge of contraception was
desirable. However, not wanting to encourage students, they believed that this information should only be given to those suspected of sexually activity – a somewhat reactive approach, and did not want to be the ones who delivered this education;

“So when I teach them, what are the safe mechanisms so you can save yourself from the transmission of HIV/AIDS? – the student may say; ‘teacher, using condoms’. Impossible I say. Why? Because even if this is true, at this moment they should know only about abstinence. But if this information is known/given to the students, it is good, because who knows if they are doing sex? – only God knows” (non-WSWM teacher, m).

These findings are not unique. Carrying out research in a Nigerian primary school, Oshi and Nakalema 2004, found that whilst teachers wanted to educate students to avoid HIV, they were unwilling to teach about the role of safe sex within this.

Many of these views are reminiscent of a morality-based approach; using SHE to impose the dominant value of adolescence, and not necessarily to educate. Other approaches seem more health-based; arguing for the importance of education, but focussing only on biology aspects and the problems of sex. This reflects that within Ethiopian society, CSE is not an approach that is considered when attempting to address SRHR issues, or certainly not one that is favoured.

7.5 A Critical Eye
When analysing such positive findings, one needs to adopt a critical position, and consider not only what is being said, but by who, to whom, and in what context. Furthermore, to consider those not involved in the study, and why. Indeed, class observation and time spent with the students and teachers revealed a genuine enthusiasm for the programme. However, one should also keep in mind the power relations involved when a Western programme is implemented in a developing context. An embedded notion that Western knowledge is desirable knowledge may not only dampen criticism, but lead to an unquestioned acceptance of the programme. This was occasionally reflected during interviews;

“It [WSWM] is very interesting, especially for students, because we learn the international knowledge, and about so many things” (WSWM student, f).

Further, due to the timing of the research, students interviewed were those still attending the programme at its close. As such, there is an absence of opinion from those who may have dropped out through dislike of the programme or attendance issues. Finally, we must consider personal characteristics that enabled students to attend the programme (see data limitations, 4.4). Students involved were more likely to be studious and motivated, and from families where education, and perhaps gender equality is valued (after school clubs given priority over housework for example). These values often came through during interviews, and also in reported behaviour. As the previous chapter showed, no WSWM
student claimed to be sexually active and few considered programme information relevant to them at present. Certainly, this study is not suggesting these students were not in need of nor did not benefit from the programme. Yet, students both able and motivated to attend WSWM, may not be those who are most susceptible to risky behaviour, and as such, not those most in need of its services. Whereas findings show that the programme addresses the main needs of its students, arguably, it is not those most in need who are being reached by it. These findings demonstrate the need for such education to be incorporated into school curriculum – to be available to all students within school hours, and not as a luxury afforded to the most studious.¹¹

7.6 SRHR Issues Affecting Adolescents in Ethiopia

Corroborative and more in-depth evidence is also key to substantiate such positive reports. All actors claimed that SHE is important, given the problems across Ethiopia. A better understanding of what these issues are perceived to be, and their causes, will help establish whether WSWM adequately addresses them.

Firstly, to see whether SRHR matters were considered some of the most pressing for students, the two focus groups were asked to list the main issues affecting them and their peers. Both inter and intra-group responses were similar. In the first group, the most common responses were;

- Lack of money
- Sexual harassment and abuse
- Girls in ‘bad relationships’
- Drug abuse
- Peer pressure

In the second;

- Lack of money
- Sexual harassment
- HIV/AIDS
- Drug abuse
- Gender inequality

The majority of these problems fall under the umbrella of SRHR. Further, with the exception of ‘lack of money’ all of these issues are tackled directly by the WSWM programme. Yet given that FGDs were held after programme completion, we must consider whether it is needs that have shaped the programme, or the programme that has shaped perceived needs. There may of course be an element of both, however during more in-depth

¹¹ This study acknowledges that those adolescents most in need of CSE, might be those not attending school. As such, out-of-school CSE is also crucial.
discussions, students were able to personalise their responses, giving accounts of how these issues have affected them, their friends, and young people in their communities.

These focus-group responses are reflective of wider perceptions. Most often cited by stakeholders were problems of HIV/AIDS, STIs and unplanned teenage pregnancy. Like students, SRHR experts and WSWM teachers also spoke about rights; including issues of gender inequality, sexual harassment and abuse, and HTPs.

When asked about the causes of adolescent sex, again stakeholders seemed to be in agreement. As recognised by WSWM students, poverty was identified as central. Several expressed a concern that this may lead to sex for money, or gifts. Teachers especially, felt that this was compounded by peer pressure - students wanting what others had, worsened in the internationally-focused setting of Addis Ababa. Further, they believed this problem to be particularly prevalent in their part of the city; due to its busy location (see 3.2). This was also mentioned by one of the school’s Vice Directors;

Respondent: “You see, it is the surroundings even, there are too many people visiting, when they first arrive in Addis, they arrive here. So they have a lot of connection, and the same time it is a market centre. And most of the time our students are economically poor. Because of all these factors, they might involve on such activity.”

Interviewer: Do you mean sexual activity? Do you think that some students have sex for money?

Respondent: Definitely, definitely. The girls, I think maybe they are confidential. They are not frankly telling this story to us, but a few students may engage in prostitution even.

A culture of gifts for sex was also a concern of the WSWM teachers. One, explained the activity she observed around the school;

“Of course I cannot know definitely if they have sex, but during the break, lunchtime, I see how the students are acting together. Some girl could say to some boy; ‘hey, buy me tea or a biscuit because you are my boyfriend’. So of course I can see and hear stuff, I cannot be 100% sure who is having sex and who is not, but I see and hear things and assume some of them might.”

This assumption is corroborated by a previous study in the school, which revealed such transactional sex was a known practice (le Matt, 2013). This study also revealed that transactions were not limited to students, but also between male teachers and female students (see Chapter 6).

Closely intertwined with this, another cause of adolescent sex (expressed predominately by students), was gender inequality; leading to girls being pressured into sexual and abusive relationships, often by older men. This is what Focus Group 1 explained they meant by ‘girls
in bad relationships’, and believed it to be a cause of teenage pregnancy and school drop-out.

Arguably, a complete removal of causal mechanisms such as poverty, requires economic development on a large scale, and is beyond the scope of CSE. However WSWM does address all of these causes and symptoms. It not only creates awareness, but asks students to critically consider norms, values and practices. Further, as seen in earlier chapters, discussions reflected that students had begun to question these things and consider the reasons people might have for entering into relationships. In doing so, it attends to the different needs that students have in terms of SHE.

7.7 Concluding Remarks
Findings show that stakeholders with knowledge of WSWM reported on the programme positively and enthusiastically without exception, and believe that it has the potential to change the lives of its students and as well as the wider society. More broadly, all stakeholders affirmed the importance of sexual health education. However, different actors placed different value on this education, depending on the role that they saw it having. Some, saw it as a tool with which to prevent adolescent sex. Others – as a way to reduce problems, and others still – as a way to develop the skills and knowledge that would assist them throughout life. These differences can not only be attributed to differences in personal values, but also to the exposure of stakeholders to CSE programmes and the field of SRHR.

Finally, findings from the chapter also pose interesting questions concerning gender differences. Why, for example, was it only male students who spoke of being in the ‘fire age’ and needing information about sexual health now? And why only a female student, not her male peers, who considered that, despite her religious views, she might use contraception within marriage? These findings link to those from previous chapters. That it is more acceptable for boys to show they have sexual desires and talk about sexual acts, and that it is taken as a female responsibility to consider the practicalities of contraception use, reflects that gender norms are still prevalent within the group.

With these positive findings regarding perceived programme importance and quality in mind, and given that previous chapters have shown teachers and student to engage with the programme, the final data chapter draws its attention to outcomes; whether stakeholders saw change, and the nature and implications of this change.
Chapter 8 – Programme Outcomes

The fourth and final data chapter focuses on the perceived outcomes of the programme. It looks at whether WSWM has had an impact on its students, or on others, and whether stakeholders perceive this impact to be positive or negative. Previous chapters have detailed the nature of implementation, programme modifications, and how the programme is viewed. All of these things have a significant effect on outcomes. The chapter will begin by discussing student perceptions; if, and how they believe the programme has affected them. Following this, the views of other actors will be considered, to see if students’ reports are corroborated. Finally, wider outcomes will be considered; whether the programme also affected those not directly involved, and in what ways.

8.1 The Student View

All interviewed students believed the programme had a positive effect on them. These effects can be separated into three categories; knowledge development, skills development and attitude change.

Knowledge was not formally tested, but based on observation and student reports. Students most often reported having learnt about HIV/AIDS, drugs, and gender equality. Also mentioned, was contraception, sexual harassment and abuse, body changes, and how to reach personal and career goals. Classroom observations and focus group discussions confirmed student knowledge of these issues to be generally good.

Regarding skills development, Chapter 7 has already described the soft and hard skills developed by students as a result of WSWM, including computer skills, English language skills, presentation and planning skills. Regarding the final point, students not only learnt the importance of planning ahead, but several revealed a realisation that their actions and hard work in the present, would help them to achieve their future goals. This shows increased self-efficacy, and is closely related to a growth in confidence – something that almost all students listed as significant outcome of the programme (the few that did not, claimed to have high self-confidence prior to joining WSWM). As well as the wider benefits, higher levels of confidence and self-efficacy in adolescents have been shown to be linked to a reduced likelihood of sexual risk taking, and an increased ability to say no (Rosenthal et al, 1991). This confidence was reported to come through learning in a safe environment, where they were encouraged to participate and talk openly (see Chapter 5). Several students, male and female equally, said they would now answer questions in classes (WSWM and others), and present in front of others - something they would have not done before.

“Before the classes started I was really scared to present in classes and tell what I knew, even if I knew the answers. Since this programme, my self-confidence is increasing, and I am very happy. I present even, and I enjoy it” (WSWM student, f).
As well as increased class participation, a number of students also claimed to have developed their body-confidence and self-esteem, learning that their bodies and the changes they were experiencing were natural and not to be ashamed of. For this reason, several also said that they were more relaxed around members of the opposite sex, especially their WSWM peers.

“We talk freely and develop our confidence and develop our friendship with each other. Before we learn in this group, we didn’t talk to each other. Male and female, separate. But now, we are close with each other, we are talking freely and we develop our confidence and our friendship” (WSWM student, m).

As seen in previous chapters, several students, predominately male, also reported a change in their attitudes: developing a more positive attitude towards sexuality, and understanding the importance of concerning gender equality;

“Now we have more information, and it’s important to teach other people so they understand it as well. Man and woman should be on the same level – be equal. ‘Man is dominant’ is what people have learnt in the past, and what we have been taught, and it also comes from religion – that woman is less than the man and man can buy woman. But in my opinion, woman and man should be the same level, so they can share everything, information and the workloads that they have, and they can grow together. If man is up, so woman has to be down, so she has to ask the man for everything. In my opinion it is much better when they are equal” (WSWM student, m).

Several of these students (all male), wanted to pass on these messages of equality to friends, family and the wider society, also seen in Chapter 5. Whilst findings have shown that traditional gender norms still play a role in students’ beliefs and understanding of the world, these reports reveal that WSWM has led them to not only recognise and question gender roles, but in some cases, to pass on messages of equality to others; an interesting outcome, and a big step towards change.

8.2 Views of Others

These changes were also noticed by others. WSWM teachers especially, spoke of the difference in their students from the first to the final class. Knowledge development was reported, although spoken about in more general terms than it was by the students. Rather, increased confidence was the outcome mentioned most often and most keenly.

“Firstly, they are too shy. They are not even willing to talk in front of other persons, they are not even involved in the warming-up activity. They are ashamed. But, progressively there is change I think. I do observe, in the class they are now willing to present any lessons” (WSWM teacher, m).

This increased confidence was not only contained to the WSWM classroom, but manifested itself in other areas of the students’ school lives;
“Really I am surprised even, I was involved in leading a question and answer programme in our school and when I registered the students, most of the WSWM students were volunteers. Without even forcing them. They are – ‘ok, I can do it’, so they get more confidence” (WSWM teacher, m).

WSWM teachers were not the only ones to notice such positive outcomes. Two other teachers at the school described the changes they had noticed within the WSWM students in their own classes; participating more and improving their grades. The school’s Directors also reflected positively. Given their influence, and that both the Director and Vice Director joined the school after programme commencement (and as such were not part of the sensitisation process), their attitudes towards WSWM were particularly interesting. Observations and reports from WSWM teachers showed a supportive attitude from the Directors. Reasons for this support were revealed in an interview with the Vice Director;

Respondent: Most of the students of WSWM are getting better and better. Even when they are seeing things happening badly, they are giving their own advice. So it is a very good programme. It is advisable to enhance such a programme in our school even

Interviewer: But do you think the school get any benefits from the programme?

Respondent: It gives us a lot of benefits. If three of us, which means the principles, do such an activity, we cannot pass information to all the society of this [school] compound. But if these students, which means WSWM students, have such a knowledge, we might disperse them to the whole school and give lessons to everybody else. So such an activity, or such a burden will be minimised.

Indeed, teaching others was something that several students said they would not have been able, or motivated to do prior to WSWM. These students felt that their knowledge, coupled with their increased confidence enabled them to pass on programme messages to others.

“Before [the programme], I am not fully interested to talk about these things. After I get these lessons, I have full confidence to talk about this freely, and after that, to change my people” (WSWM student, m).

This also shows students’ value of the programme. After all, information considered dull or irrelevant is only forgotten. In this way, outcomes are not limited to the effects on WSWM students, but to other young people as well. The benefits of this peer-peer learning was also recognised by WSWM teachers, as having great potential for disseminating valuable information and reducing problems in the school. Its value has also been reflected in other studies; Shuey (1999) found increased student abstinence in one school in Uganda, following the involvement of some of its students in an SHE intervention. Students reported that peer education (the intervention group passing on messages to others) was a central reason for this. However, this potential is not always realised, and for various reasons may only have a limited effect. In a similar study, Plummer et al (2007) showed that student educators were restricted by poor education and literacy levels, not being able to overcome
their low position within the school hierarchy, and powerful and contradictory adolescent sexual norms.

Therefore, in order to be effective, peer-peer education must meet certain criteria. The information passed on needs to be factually correct and of adequate detail. Indeed, findings from Chapter 5 show that some students do disseminate information in this way. Others however, adopt a less comprehensive approach, only speaking in general terms – and giving advice such as ‘be safe’ or adopting a problem-focus, as characterised by the health and morality-based approach to SHE. Further, Shuey’s study demonstrates the need for school support, students who are well educated, and yet again, the dangers of relying solely on a message of abstinence, at odds with adolescent reality. This once more, shows the importance of understanding students as active agents, and diverse in their values and abilities, yet at the same time, framed within the cultural context.

Outside of the school setting, reports of programme outcomes were equally positive. Representatives from NGOs involved with implementation also claimed to see the confidence increase in students. Further, there were reports that parents too had noticed the impacts of the programme;

“Yeah, I do have a chance to talk with the previous students’ parents, they are even happy, because their children have become more successful in their education, even they were visiting the exhibition programme – what the students have done in training throughout the year - that’s nice” (WSWM teacher, m).

8.3 Beyond Students
Yet outcomes are not only limited to students, but appear to be reaching others. One NGO representative believed that WSWM students were also changing the minds of their parents’; opening them up to talk about sexuality. One of the WSWM teachers also expressed how the programme had affected him, and by extension, his (non WSWM) students

“I also train myself even, whilst giving a [WSWM] training. Even I am interested in different topics on the programme, like drugs. It coincides with my subject matter – biology. So while training them, I just feed my [biology] students, just like a training. I was teaching that topic inside the class as a training; to discuss it, to reflect it, to act in a role play, different things…” (WSWM teacher, m).

This demonstrates not only an interest at a personal level, but enough belief in the programme to incorporate one of its lessons into the biology curriculum, both in terms of subject matter and teaching techniques. Like the WSWM students who share their knowledge with friends, this personal interest results in more students being reached by the programme.

Finally, those associated with the programme outside of the school have also reported change. A programme officer from the implementing organisation spoke about how she
now understood the importance of providing students with comprehensive information, and trusting them to make their own decisions. Similarly, a programme director at the coordinating organisation, spoke passionately about how the WSWM trainings he attended motivated him to research SRHR issues, and ultimately to question his own norms and values, even those held closest to him;

“Yeah I was one of the resistant persons when I first took this kind of training... most of the issues in SRH were not new for me but you have your own culture, your own beliefs, everything you know, so it was so difficult to accept... those sensitive issues, not other things. You know, I can understand them and I know, but it was so difficult. And then, I started reading and so I get concepts and know what is the views of the world, and even what I have learned in some countries, and even human rights... – you know homosexuality is one aspect. So, the very thing what I have learned, if it is sexual orientation, if it is inborn, what can you do? You accept it, you know” (SRHR Programme Director, coordinating NGO, m).

8.5 Concluding Remarks
Findings reveal outcomes to be positive, and include knowledge development, increased confidence and self-efficacy, changing attitudes and questioning norms and values, as well as more vocational computer skills. Further, outcomes were not just limited to WSWM students, but stretched to WSWM teachers, parents of students, students not involved in the programme, and NGO workers. This wide-reach of programme information, is testament to its perceived relevance and importance, and shows students’ increased ability to discuss sensitive information. Peer-peer learning is one very interesting outcome, and one that has great potential. However, this potential should be framed within the wider study. As seen, the cultural context affects the messages that students pass on. Therefore, the nature and quality of the information that is given needs to be better understood. Positively however, findings from Chapters 5 and 6 show that even students who did not agree with the use of contraception, claimed they would pass on messages of its importance.

Of course, as previously explained, WSWM participants may have traits that pre-disposed them to respond well to the programme, and as before, findings should always be considered critically. However, reports of positive change within the students were numerous, and came from a variety of stakeholders. Further, personal observations were made of motivated and assertive students, who participated well in class, and who were able to talk to this outsider about sensitive issues with enthusiasm and confidence.
Chapter 9 – Conclusion

Findings presented in the preceding data chapters have shown how CSE programme implementation is effected by both micro (agentic) and macro (structural) factors. This has been done through empirical observations, and by gaining an understanding of the norms and values that shape society. It has shown implementation to be a dynamic process involving the interaction of various actors, and the strategies that are formed as part of this – both proactive and reactive. This concluding chapter will explore these findings further. Once main findings have been summarised, it will zoom out from the empirical level, and using the conceptual scheme presented in section 2.5, will consider the processes at work, and the extent to which these corroborate or negate the hypotheses developed from previous research. These discussions will work towards answering the main research question of the study. Based on these conclusions, recommendations will be made; both for ways of understanding CSE implementation and for the implementation of future CSE programmes. Finally, suggestions for research that can build on this study will be made.

9.1 Summary of Findings

The previous four data chapters have served to respond to the sub-questions presented in section 1.2. These questions will now be answered, providing a summary of the main findings of the study.

- **How is the programme implemented by teachers and students?**

  Chapter 5 revealed a positive break from previous studies that revealed how SHE implementation is often met with barriers in the classroom, and used to impose the dominant morals of the society, and/or a narrow and negative understanding of sexuality. Indeed, findings show that both teachers and students spoke openly and comprehensively about sexuality, and took on-board its positives, as well as its potential problems. Further, classroom practice was seen to complement programme goals – especially gender equality. The effort made by teachers to ensure all students participated equally, was seen to have the intended effect. The majority of students believed it was the openness and encouragement of their teachers that enabled them to participate, despite initial embarrassment. Teachers attributed their approach predominately to the pre-programme training they received.

  The chapter also discussed implementation beyond the classroom, with students reporting to speak to friends and family about the programme. In some cases, this discussion was described as detailed and open. In other cases, it was reported to be in more general terms – not discussing sexuality in detail, but other lessons, such as the importance of self-confidence. Many students acknowledged the role that the programme played in this – giving them the interest, knowledge and confidence to talk to others. Yet, they also acknowledged household influence, attributing their (lack of) ability to speak openly to family, to their parents (lack of) education, believing that better educated parents placed greater value on open communication. A positive correlation was also found between those
from more open households and those who spoke in greater detail and about sensitive issues with friends.

➢ How, and to what extent, does cultural context affect programme implementation?

Yet, despite these positive findings, there was also evidence of programme modification, with information seen to be reconciled with the cultural context. This occurred with the most culturally-sensitive information, and involved both teachers and students. Whereas sexuality and sexual relationships were discussed as positive, they were understood as for being enjoyed later in life, and accompanied by the message of ‘adolescent abstinence as best’. Whereas gender equality was spotlighted, deeply embedded understandings of the dominance of men, and submissiveness of women were seen to endure. Whereas homosexuality was discussed, it was discussed as a problem.

Looking beyond the classroom provided a clearer understanding of the cultural setting, and reasons for these interpretations. In the school, non-CSE teachers were reluctant to discuss SRHR issues with their students through fear of inappropriateness, and believed that all should be taught to abstain. Further, findings revealed attitudes and practices that reproduced gender inequality, including unequal treatment of male and female students (and girls blamed for boys’ poor behaviour), and sexual harassment. At the household level and in the wider community, the message of ‘adolescent abstinence’ also dominated, even amongst those who worked in SRHR. These external messages were not found to have a negative effect on student knowledge, but came through in the values placed on information. This was reflected, for example, in the fact that many students considered sex-related information only important for the future, and that only a small minority of students said they would inform their parents if in a relationship. Yet encouragingly, even those who did not personally agree with some of the programme’s teachings (such as the use of contraception) still claimed they would pass on its messages to peers.

➢ How do stakeholders perceive the relevance and quality of the programme?

Chapter 7 revealed positive findings regarding programme need, relevance and quality. Teachers and students considered SRHR issues of great importance, and saw CSE as an effective way of addressing these issues. Further, they reported that all issues covered by the programme, including those considered the most culturally sensitive such as homosexuality, were relevant, and that information was delivered in a clear and engaging way. Students particularly enjoyed working in groups, and the fact the programme was computer-based. Concerns were raised by some (teachers and students) regarding language; that understanding information in English took time. Of particular concern to teachers, was the length of time that lessons took to complete; with insufficient time left for discussion and further activities. Further, other stakeholders considered there to be a need for SHE, yet there was disagreement on the form that this should take. Aside from those
involved in the programme, stakeholders adopted either a morality or health-based approach to education, none mentioning the positives of sexuality.

How do stakeholders perceive programme outcomes?
The final data chapter, concentrating on programme outcomes, revealed diverse and positive effects. As well as knowledge, students developed key skills – including computer skills, English language, and presentation skills. In addition to this, students displayed critical thinking in their questioning of cultural norms and values (especially regarding gender roles), increased self-confidence, and greater self-efficacy. Further, outcomes were not limited to WSWM students, but reached others involved in implementation. WSWM teachers and NGO workers claimed the programme had caused them to re-consider their own values, such as approach to SHE, and the importance of equal right for everyone. Finally, through students’ discussion of the programme topics, and WSWM teachers incorporating some lessons and teaching methods in their regular classes, it also reached those not directly involved.

9.2 Structural processes
Overlaying these empirical findings with the conceptual scheme, presented in section 2.5, aids in understanding them at a deeper, more critical level. As shown on the left of the diagram, the key actors, or ‘strategic agents’ within the study operate within a layered structural setting. Each layer has been shown to contain various beliefs and practices that either complement or contradict programme messages. As hypothesised, it has also shown that this setting does not affect all actors equally, but prioritises some over others. The nature and extent of this, is dependent on the layer, or setting, in question.

The setting linked most directly with implementation, is that of the classroom. Previous research has found classroom practices to have a great bearing on the delivery and outcomes of sexual health programmes. As it is itself embedded within the broader structural setting, this was often seen to negate programme goals (Bhana 2012, Human Rights watch 2001, Mirembe & Davis 2001, Plummer et al 2007, Smith & Harrison 2013). Indeed, ‘damaging’ or contradictory practices at this level, result in the reinforcement and reproduction of norms, incorrect information, and a lack of positive change (Bosmans et al, 2006).

Yet despite concerns, the study found limited evidence of this. On the contrary, efforts were seen to counteract damaging practices. Student participation and female participation particularly, was encouraged, as was open and at times in-depth discussion of SRHR issues. Further, findings show these efforts to be fruitful, resulting in equal student participation, comprehensive knowledge, non-negative attitudes towards contraception, improved self-confidence, and positive attitudes toward sexuality and gender equality. Therefore, in
contrast to those studies cited, the classroom level was seen to complement programme goals; providing a nurturing environment for all in which to address SRHR.

However, as hypothesised, and shown in Chapter 6, the classroom was not found to be impervious to the influence of those layers which surround it. Indeed, arguably no social setting is. Thus, understanding the broader implementing environment is crucial. The school level revealed various beliefs and practices which contradict programme teachings. Echoing findings of Mirembe and Davis (2001), this included; sexual harassment, gendered discipline patterns (the unequal treatment of male and female students), compulsory heterosexuality and hegemonic masculinity (men as aggressors with natural and uncontrollable urges). This study adds to this, enforced adolescent abstinence (enforced, as this is often the sole message given to students, even to those suspected of being sexually active). Whilst these practices have a significant effect on all students, they are especially damaging to girls.

Further, findings have shown such practices are not unique to the school, but echo beliefs of the wider society (represented in the scheme by the ‘community’ and ‘national’ levels). Worryingly, this is not limited to those parts of society perceived as the most conservative, but reflect more general beliefs, held even by those working in the field of SRHR.

In addition, the study has also revealed the importance of the household setting. Whilst not included in the original conceptual scheme, findings showing the extent of its influence on students has warranted a revision of the scheme (see figure 8). Although not directly connected to the classroom or school, the household is framed within the community and is thus exposed to, and shaped by the same norms and values. This is reflected in the clear and unwavering message that resonates from it – abstinence. For students, this setting is extremely influential, and as such, an understanding of it is crucial. Beyond shaping values, it has also been exposed as key in shaping attitudes and abilities. As such, it plays an important role in the implementation process. To an extent, students acknowledged this; noting the effect of their upbringing on their comfort in discussing SRHR issues. Yet, the effect it had on their interpretation of the programme remained unrecognised. That better educated parents are reported to be more open and able to discuss SRHR issues with their children, echoes the research of Lindstrom et al (2013), which found a positive correlation between Ethiopian adolescents knowledge of sex and contraception and their parents’ education level.

Finally, encompassing all of these settings, is that if the nation. Whereas this has not been a focus of the study (and it should be remembered that the views of individuals in this study are not necessarily representative of nationwide views), findings have shown its importance. Not just the effect of national policy on SRH education and services, but on how citizens frame the SRHR issues of the country’s adolescents, and as such, their beliefs on how these issues should be addressed. Furthermore, in light of the apparent
governmental hardened stance on homosexuality and human rights ‘interference’ (see 3.1.3), this setting is crucial to consider in future programme implementation.

9.3 Agentic Processes
Understanding the structural setting in this layered, multi-faceted, and strategically selective way, we better understand the empirical findings at the classroom level, especially programme modifications. Actors become framed within the hidden mechanisms that shape their reality and the actions they take. Yet the study does not believe actors are constrained by this setting, rather acknowledges their ability to negotiate it; to make strategic calculations given the situations in which they find themselves. This is evidenced in the transformational practices seen both in and out of the classroom. Discussing sexuality (and positively), is an example of this. Critically considering gender norms, another. Better understanding these processes, is key to better understanding strategies for addressing SRHR, and ultimately to the factors that lead to successful CSE.

Findings have shown that in the classroom, these atypical practices were (initially) teacher-driven. CSE teachers broke the ‘cycle of silence’ (as described in Chapter 6), by discussing SRHR issues openly and encouraging their students to do the same. Pre-programme training played a key role in this. Developing the knowledge, as well as fostering the attitudes and skills to effectively support the programme, this training can be viewed as ‘thickening’ the agency of teachers in the classroom, enabling dominant norms to be overridden and sensitivities to be addressed. Indeed, as theorized by Shawer (2010), it is the teacher’s
knowledge, skills and experiences that determines their ability to involve the students and shape their interaction. In leading by example and establishing a safe and encouraging environment, teachers were able to develop similar traits and practices in their students. This was seen through student reports of increased confidence and reduced embarrassment, and an ability to engage with SRHR issues both inside and outside the classroom. As such, student agency may be seen as relational; thickened as a result of the thickened agency of their teachers.

However, just as agency is not a zero-sum-thing, neither is it constant. Whilst teacher-student relational agency may explain certain behaviour, it does not explain the difference in students upon entering the programme, and neither does it explain differences outside of the classroom; why some students still felt embarrassed to pass on detailed information to others. Indeed, as theorised; agency was not only experienced differently by different actors, but experienced differently by the same actor in different situations.

This is due to various internal and external factors, as explained by Klocker (cited in Bell, 2011). External factors consist of the different ways that actors experience the ‘strategically selective’ setting. Although efforts were made at the classroom level to counter this, other environments were less favourable. For all students, discussion of SRHR became more difficult outside of the classroom. However, dominant gender norms, constructed by a strongly patriarchal society, made it especially difficult for girls. This was reflected in considerably fewer female students reporting to provide detailed information to friends, and to talk about the most sensitive issues. In this way, we may understand agency as ‘thinning’ outside of the classroom.

Internal factors constitute the different experiences, identities and characteristics that make up the ‘strategic agent’. These are profuse and complex, but findings have unveiled one constant that may account for differences in student agency; the influence of parents. Students with greater confidence and ‘thicker’ agency at the start of the programme, attributed this to the level of ‘openness’ with which they had been brought up, and this, in turn, to their parents’ education level. Even in settings less favourable than the classroom, these students were able to discuss programme information in greater detail, and with a greater range of people. In this respect, we again see agency as relational; – parents agency (thickened by education) affecting the agency of their child.

This interplay between structural and agentic factors can perhaps be better understood using figure 9. A high parental education level and a highly favourable setting will result in thick agency; a low parental education level and an unfavourable setting, in thinner agency. Therefore, agency might be thickened in the safety of the classroom setting, but relapses outside of this. Yet despite this, findings showed the programme to have a positive, and ‘agency enhancing’ effect on all students. Whilst this was greatest inside the classroom, even outside students reported; discussing SRHR issues with others, participating more in classes, and volunteering more readily for extra-curricular assignments.
9.4 Calculation, Actions & Outcomes

Although transformational practices were initially teacher-driven, or certainly teacher-ignited, programme negotiation was a two-way process and the classroom environment co-constructed. Findings reveal a dialectical relationship between teacher and student calculations and actions, as represented by the two-way arrow that connects them in the conceptual scheme. Indeed, past research has often neglected student influence on classroom practice. However, as highlighted by Tabulawa (2004), student strategies play a key role. This study has shown responses to teacher strategies of open discussion to be positive. With students feeling safe, encouraged, and able to participate, teacher efforts were reinforced by way of a ‘positive feedback cycle.’

Yet this feedback was seen to work both ways – playing a key role in the reproduction as well as the transformation of norms. Embedded norms and values, such as student abstinence, heteronormativity and aggressive masculinity, usually enacted themselves implicitly. By not addressing, or possibly even acknowledging these assumptions, teachers and students reinforced each other’s values. At other times, these norms and values became more explicit – homosexuality being discussed as a ‘problem’ for example. Whether all actors shared this belief or not, a dominance of this view stifled further discussions or contrasting opinions.

Indeed, these interpretations of programme messages reflect a clear propensity towards convergence; whilst sexuality was discussed as positive, this did not extend to the adolescent level, whilst homosexuality was discussed, it was interpreted as a problem, whilst gender norms were questioned, they persisted at deeper levels. Borrowing from the field work of psychologists and anthropologists, this supports the widespread theory that people become ‘more alike in their beliefs, attitudes and behaviors when they interact’ (Axelrod, 1997 p203). In this study, this interaction takes place both within and outside the classroom setting, and the shift towards similarity is reflected in interpretations and discussions of programme information in a more culturally acceptable way. This is also a significant strategy, even though it may not always be a conscious one.
Key in shaping these teaching strategies, was the view held of the adolescent and the agency afforded to them. Indeed, CSE teachers were seen to treat students as active agents; encouraging students to think for themselves, and acknowledging their diverse experiences and realities. This perspective was awarded to all students, regardless of gender. Girls were not defined in relation to boys, and the different reasons males and females may have for entering into sexual relationships was acknowledged. Whilst this approach to adolescents was crucial in developing classroom dynamics complementary to the programme, arguably, it is the very design of the CSE programme that fostered this critical, nuanced and student-centred perspective.

Yet, a naïve view of the adolescent was not entirely extinguished. Efforts were seen to keep those believed to be abstinent ‘protected.’ These efforts were observed to be greater outside of the classroom, yet were also witnessed inside of it; through clear ‘abstinence first’ messages, problem-focused discussions of adolescent sex, and a belief that no WSWM student was sexually active. This risks negating the gains made in promoting sexuality as positive, and in helping students to make their own, informed decisions. Rather, these practices reflect a mixture of morality and health-based approaches to SHE, and may result in negative attitudes, shameful feelings, and reduced communication.

Empirically, these co-constructed strategies were seen to result in evidence of both curriculum fidelity and curriculum adaptation. However, in contrast to Snyder’s description (1992), due the design, quality and perceived relevance of the programme, it was fidelity and not adaptation that resulted in engaged students, critical thinking, and an upset of dominant norms and values. This is represented by line 1 on the conceptual scheme. ‘Transformation’ can be understood at both an agentic level; changing individuals, but also, on a wider, more structural level, through the challenging of norms and the dissemination of programme information.

In further divergence to Snyder’s model, not only was adaptation seen to result in the reproduction of norms and values (represented by line 2), but it was found to be a two-way process. Although teachers were seen to play a driving role in their ability to involve students, it was the dialectical interaction between teachers and students, the perceived sensitivities of the other, and implicit reaffirmations of programme interpretations that resulted in adaptation.

However, that is not to say that programme fidelity will always result in transformation. Indeed, this is dependent on student interpretation of, and ability to act on programme messages, as shown in Chapter 6. An inability to take on and implement lessons, will result in reproduction, represented by line 3 in the scheme. Yet, findings revealed this was limited, with students apparently able to reconcile potentially conflicting messages, if not on a personal level then still appreciating their importance to others. Finally, there was no instance of programme modification leading to transformation (line 4), corroborating reports of high programme relevance and quality.
9.5 Revisiting the Research Question

In sum, and to provide a concise answer to the main research question; ‘How is the implementation of a sexuality education programme negotiated by teachers and students in an Ethiopian school, in their efforts to address adolescent SRHR issues, and how is its relevance, quality and outcomes perceived by stakeholders?’, this study has revealed programme implementation to be a dynamic negotiation process. This process is one that involves teachers and students equally, and plays out not only inside the classroom, but outside, through interactions with others. The ‘structural’ or cultural setting, composed of embedded norms and practices, results in implementation as a play-off; between the issues addressed by the programme, the interpretation of these issues, and an awareness of the environment in which implementation is taking place. In some cases, this led to messages being understood in a more culturally-acceptable way, and in turn, to programme modification and a reproduction of certain norms and values. In many cases however, programme fidelity was seen, with norms and practices being challenged and uprooted. Given that the programme was perceived to meet the SRHR needs of adolescents, this resulted in transformation through student knowledge development and the fostering of attitudes and skills essential for a positive perception of themselves and others, and a positive step towards securing their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

9.6 Recommendations

- **The prioritization of pre-programme training for teachers, that is extensive and comprehensive.** This should not only focus on knowledge, but on developing the skills and attitudes within teachers that complement not contradict CSE and enables teachers to foster the same skills and attitudes within their students. This study has shown the beneficial outcomes of this – to both teachers, students, and even those not involved directly in the programme. Ensuring that this training is implemented to a high level may further reduce programme modifications seen in this study.

- **A wider sensitization process prior to implementation.** If possible, this should include, or be able to reach, all school staff (not just department heads) as well as parents of students. The aim of this is to reduce the contradictory, and at times harmful practices, that this study has shown leads to a more culturally excepted re-interpretation of the programme, and possibly, students fearing acting on their newly developed knowledge. It is also hoped that that exposure to open discussion and an understanding of its importance will help break the ‘cycle of silence’ which prevents the discussion of SRHR issues amongst actors not involved in the programme.

- **A consideration of local capacities.** From a programme-design perspective, as well as being adapted to local culture, CSE programmes should be adapted to local capacities and capabilities. This includes a consideration of lesson and of programme length, and using language and content that is as clear and understandable as possible. From a school perspective, this should include
increased support for teachers, whether in terms of ease of workload or a similar incentive.\footnote{Pay incentives may prove problematic, and risk reducing teacher quality or suitability.}

- **Values/attitudes training for school support workers (such as counsellors), and service providers who work with adolescents.** This is a recommendation at both a programme, and a policy-level. The study has revealed concerns regarding a judgmental attitude of service providers, and a lack of privacy with regard to service location and confidentiality. CSE is of little important if such barriers prevent students from implementing its lessons.

- **The integration of CSE into national curricula.** This may currently seem a far off goal, yet government efforts are being made to extend educational material at all levels. The positive outcomes shown in this study, reveal the need to step up these efforts – to ensure that all students are reached – especially those most marginalized, and most at risk to dangerous practice.

- **An understanding that there is space for CSE within religious societies.** In connection to the previous recommendation, many governments and societies have shied away from CSE, due to a belief that it will corrode cultural values, and cause promiscuity. Rather, CSE should be viewed as contributing and not detracting; helping youngsters to make well-informed and considered, rather than risky or impulsive decisions and to build the knowledge, skills and attitudes to become healthy, happy and well-rounded individuals.

- **Guidance of student-driven curricula.** Students should remain at the heart of curriculum development, with their needs, abilities, and experiences a central focus. Student involvement will aid this process. However, it has been shown that students operate within the same structures as their elders, and are influenced in similar ways. This may result in reproduction and not transformation. Therefore it is recommended that this process is guided by SRHR and education experts.

- **An inclusion of students in the teaching equation.** From a more academic perspective, this study has shown the classroom environment to be co-constructed, and that successful programme implementation requires amenable students as well as teachers. This calls for a recognition of students as strategic agents, and an understanding of the effect of students strategies on teaching and vice versa.

- Finally, from a more epistemological perspective, a reminder of the need for continuous reflection when discussing the importance of CSE and uncovering its barriers. Issues such as gender inequality and sexuality as shameful, should not be viewed as issues of the Global South, but as global issues. The ability to overcome such barriers, towards the goal of securing SRHR for all, requires a sharing of knowledge and experience, and the ability to critically assess one’s own culture and personal values, and well as those of another.
9.7 Further research

- Findings have shown the significant influence of the household on student values, abilities and ultimately, programme interpretation. Research that further explores the communication of SRHR issues at the household level, may therefore benefit CSE implementation, including; what enables or prevents parents from discussing information with their children (beyond the general effects of education level, reported in this study), the nature of the information that is discussed (for example, whilst the abstinence message dominates, are students given supplementary information by parents, and if so is this information factually correct?), and parents’ perceptions of the importance and aim of these discussions.

- Not the focus of this study, but having been shown to be influential, is the role that the media plays in SRH education and practice amongst adolescents in Ethiopia. Throughout the research, numerous stakeholders (including students) listed media influence as one of the main ways in which young people were exposed to information and messages about sexuality. This included soap operas, pornography, and ‘documentary style’ programmes. However, informal discussions with groups of students outside of the capital city, called into question the nature of this information – the extent to which it is fact based, and the purpose that it has; whether to entertain, to inform, or to instil the dominant values of society. Given its reported influence, a study that looks into the information that adolescents are exposed to, and the way in which it is received, interpreted, and used, seems necessary. Not least, as these messages may conflict with CSE information, and lead to risky practice.

- This study has touched on the potentials of peer-to-peer learning in bringing CSE to a wider audience, with students in the study reporting to discuss programme information with friends. Yet the nature of this discussion varied. Further research is recommended to better determine the nature of these discussions, and the extent to which relayed information deviates from its original form. If information is modified or selective, then in what way do messages deviate, and why? – As the result of embarrassment, personal/religious beliefs, misunderstanding? Further, given that effective peer-to-peer learning will maximize programme impact at no or little extra cost or strain on resources, it should consider how these issues can be addressed.

- It is recommended that a comparative study be conducted in an implementing school in a different administration zone; where culture, ethnicity, religion and level of urbanisation may differ from the site of this study. The research may explore whether dominating norms, values and practices differ, if they are more deeply rooted, and if so, how this affects programme implementation. For example, are
teachers and students still able to stand aside from the culture and to discuss SRHR issues from a fact-based, disinterested perspective? Further, beyond the classroom, is the programme supported by the school and wider community, and if not, what are the effects on implementation? Finally, is there is a greater gap between programme and external messages, and if so, how is this reconciled?

- Finally, a more critical look at Western developed sexuality education curricula and its implementation at a local level is advised. This may for example, adopt a critical cultural political economy approach to education (CCPEE), and consider the power structures and hidden values and mechanisms that result in what is taught, where, and who is involved (see Jessop 2004, Robertson & Dale 2012). This will address some of the questions asked and assumptions made in this study, including; the content and goals of SHE programmes (and the role that national, organisational, and individual values and structures play in this), who is included and excluded in the processes of decision making and implementation, and also, what the consequences of these things are.
References


DEC (2012), *Proceeding of WSWM Pilot Project, Ethiopia*


Goldman, J. (2012) International guidelines on sexuality education and their relevance to a contemporary curriculum for children aged 5-8 years in Educational Review pp 1-20

Goldman, J., Coleman, S. (2013) Primary school puberty/sexuality education: student-teachers’ past learning, present professional education, and intention to teach these subjects in Sex Education, Vol.13, No.3 pp276-290


Lieshout, S., (2011) Explaining non-findings in Kenyan the world starts with me evaluation. MA Thesis: University of Maastricht


Mkumbo, K. A. (2012) Teachers’ Attitudes towards Comfort about Teaching School-based Sexuality Education in Urban and Rural Tanzania in Global Journal of Health Science, Vol. 4, No. 4 pp149-158


WHO (2013) *Global Health Observatory Data Repository*. Accessible online at: http://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.main

