

Exploring Sexuality Education and the Burdened Teacher: A Participatory Approach in a Rural Primary School in Kenya

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Abstract

Twenty-five years since the onset of HIV/AIDS, young people aged 15–24 now make up half of new HIV infections. This paper advocates for comprehensive sexuality education as an effective panacea to reverse this, with teachers stepping up and embracing their role as sexuality educators. The exploration of this challenge is informed by a small-scale participatory study of teacher responses in a rural primary school in Nakuru district, Kenya. Dialogue was held with 18 teachers (11 females, seven males) on the challenges they faced in teaching sexuality education and teachers emerged as disorientated and embarrassed in conversations about sexuality issues with the pupils. Because sexuality education lacks a curriculum, teachers have found it challenging to integrate it into regular subjects; they also observed that parents seem resistant to addressing this at home, and thus this task falls to them. In the study, a process of self-awareness of the need for them to step up and teach sexuality education emerges among the participants. A key finding is that participatory and dialectical interventions that can prepare teachers and develop their confidence in teaching sexuality education are required.

Keywords: Sexuality education, Kenya, HIV/AIDS, Primary school

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