

Sex Educator or Change Agent?

Experiences of a Sex(uality) Peer Education Programme in an Era of HIV and
AIDS

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Despite the popularity of sex(uality) peer education as an HIV prevention strategy within diverse contexts, an understanding of the experiences of those intimately placed within these programmes is limited. Instead, the majority of research in this field relies on hegemonic notions of rational human behaviour that operates under the assumption that knowledge leads to sexual behaviour change. This study explores peer facilitators, peer educators, and NGO staff experiences of a sex(uality) peer education programme in Cape Town, South Africa to understand meaning-making around sex(uality) peer education within the complex power dynamics of donor-NGO interactions.

This study provides a critical case study of a schools-based sex(uality) peer education intervention, drawing on individual and focus group interviews. Using a feminist and gender lense, the study highlights a number of features of the programme and implementation, which reinforces gender inequalities and notions of a rational sexual being rather than creating channels for a new understanding of sex(uality) to emerge. These include peer facilitators' and peer educators' experience as change agents rather than sex educators, the preference for biomedical and socio-economic content over gender content, and the overall absence of a critical engagement with gender constructions and power dynamics in relationships. The study also points to the limits of donor-funded interventions, which tend to prescribe the content and scope of schools-based programmes, to the detriment of real engagement with issues that face and constrain the target group including the implications of what 'sex(uality) education' has come to mean for young men and women engaged in these interventions.

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This dissertation is dedicated to all the young women and men in the world who crave a sex(uality) education that speaks to their hearts, souls, and desires. May you find the knowledge that you need that allows you live fully in yourself, rather than feeling shame and guilt for your sexual desires.

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

This dissertation critically engages with NGO¹ staff, young men and young women's² representations and experiences of a sex(uality)³ peer education programme in Khayelitsha, South Africa. It focuses on the work of Sexual Health and Education (SHEA)⁴, a Cape Town-based NGO that was founded in 2009. Specifically, I engage with participants that were part of SHEA's eight-year sex(uality) peer education programme in 17 secondary schools in Khayelitsha.⁵ The main aim of the research is to explore the experiences of peer facilitators (PFs) and peer educators⁶ (PEs) in an NGO-based peer educational programme as well as to investigate what it means to deliver this programme within a donor-partner dynamic.

Since the early 1990's, South African strategies to manage the HIV-epidemic prioritized popular education and a focus on the sexuality of 'youth' (Asmal, 2005). The influence of loveLife in particular normalized the concept of 'peer-to-peer' learning as one of the most valuable forms of 'HIV-prevention' education (Templeton, 2003a). While, as Thaver and Leao (2012) point out, formal education systems at the secondary school level were slow to meet the challenges of pedagogy around sex(uality) education, NGOs were quick to develop multiple forms of sex(uality) education. My theoretical interest in this work was grounded in debates about the meaning of these trainings for young people, particularly those in resource-poor contexts. Feminist debates on sex(uality) education argue for deeply participatory forms of consciousness-raising and socially-critical education (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002; Pattman, 2006) as well as a deep

¹ NGO is defined as a "non-governmental organisation", which can also be referred to as a CBO (community-based organisation) or NPO (non-profit organisation).

² In using the term 'young people', I acknowledge that the term has the potential to homogenise all young people by ignoring the multiple identities and life circumstances of 'young people' (Nandigiri, 2012). However, for this research paper, it is necessary to have a separate category, and 'young people' will be defined as those between 18 and 35 years of age.

³ I use the term sex(uality) to encompass both sexual acts and practices as well as the notion of sexuality as an extension of physical relations. Therefore, sex(uality) moves beyond the sexual acts and practices to include emotions, love, self-esteem, relationships, identity, and gender.

⁴ The name of the NGO has been changed, and minimal details given about its work, in order to protect and disguise its identity.

⁵ I offer a mere glimpse into this programme, and thereby do not claim to have represented the organisation as a whole.

⁶ Peer facilitators are young people over the age of 18 years old who train the peer educators and provide ongoing support and mentorship. Each peer facilitator is stationed at each respective school. Peer educators are in Grade 8 or 9 and are supposed to plan and teach the sex(uality) lessons.

engagement with the way in which constructions of femininity and masculinity place young people's sexual health at risk (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002; Templeton, 2003a; Jewkes, 2013). My interest in what it means to be embedded, through a donor-funded programme, in a sex(uality) education within Khayelitsha – an environment certainly characterized by diverse forms of poverty – arose from these debates.

Some feminist scholarship finds that notions of a 'rational sexual being' dominate HIV prevention research and intervention programmes (Arnfred, 2004; Tamale, 2011). This notion relies on hegemonic notions of rational human behaviour that reinforces the idea that contracting AIDS reflects 'some form of irrationality' (Motsemme, 2007: 63). In this way, this concept completely disregards the socio-economic and gendered context of young people's lives and its effects on their sexual decision-making. Simultaneously, it reduces sexuality to a logical aspect of one's life and thus disregards the nuances and intricacies of individual sexualities (Tamale, 2011). This pressure to be a 'rational sexual being' becomes even more complex for PFs and PEs who are expected to embody examples as sex(uality) educators. Hence, this dissertation seeks to explore the meaning of PFs' and PEs' own representations of their experience as 'educators'; in the process, discourses on the meaning of NGO driven programmes which rely on donor-funding are generated. I engage these as a way of unpacking the complexity of sex(uality) peer education, which depends on the complex, often transparent, and yet well-intentioned dynamics of donor-partner interaction.

Following the introduction, the second chapter outlines the theoretical and contextual framework underpinning the development of the discourse on a singular 'African sexuality', which originated – according to some theorists (McClintock, 1995; Tamale, 2011) in notions of the 'dark continent discourse'. This discussion also critically examines literature on the historical and social context of sex(uality) and HIV and AIDS in South Africa as well as on public health interventions that attempt to rationalise sexual behaviour through education. Furthermore, I examine previous research on sex(uality) peer education programmes and the ways in which gender constructions and inequalities are (re)produced and (re)constituted in both content and delivery.

In chapter three, I describe the research methodology that informs the research dissertation. It includes consideration of my positionality within this research space and discusses how I approached this particular research topic. Presentation and analyses of the research findings are presented in chapter four and five. First, I draw on interviews with the director and key programme staff of the NGO to explore what it means for an NGO to deliver a sex(uality) education programme within the constraints of donor funding. Second, I explore peer facilitator and peer educator representations' of their work as sex(uality) educators in a context of poverty, HIV and AIDS, and gender inequality.

In the last chapter, I wrap up the discussion and explain how the experiences of SHEA staff, PF and PEs' may influence how we think about the role of donor-led interventions and how sex(uality) peer education programmes can take gender seriously.

In sum, this research aims to shed light on the ways in which meaning is generated for sex(uality) education by the various participants. As a feminist activist and scholar, I am especially interested in contributing to a contextualised understanding of participants' engagements with a sex(uality) peer education programme, and in particular, I hope to explore the possibilities for transformative and feminist knowledge creation.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review lays the historical and theoretical foundation for this dissertation. It begins by reviewing critical literature on the history of research on sex(uality) and HIV and AIDS in South Africa. I pay particular attention to how the discourse on an 'African sexuality' that needs to be controlled and rationalised is (re)produced in public health interventions. Then, I look at the background of the peer education approach in the context of the South African HIV and AIDS epidemic and discuss the opportunities for these programmes to include a feminist understanding of gender and sex(uality).

History of Sex(uality) and HIV and AIDS in South Africa

A critical investigation of sex(uality) and HIV and AIDS in South Africa must include a historical perspective of the epidemic and the discourses surrounding it to fully understand its implications and nuances within a racialised and class-defined society. At the same time, 'African sexualities' remain to be viewed as something that needs to be controlled through the production of knowledge and rational decision-making. Even the discourse on an 'African sexuality' erases the complexities and experiences of sexualities as they are performed and experienced in widely different locations in Africa. This singular notion of an African sexuality has formed the basis of public health interventions and much AIDS research.⁷ In this section, I engage with the work of feminist scholars on African sexualities as well as with case studies that investigate public health interventions in Southern Africa.

HIV and AIDS as a Defining Moment

Posel (2005) offers a useful historical perspective of the ways in which the AIDS epidemic has influenced knowledges of sex(uality) in post-apartheid South Africa. During the apartheid era, the government regime subjected sex(uality) to heavy censorship and repressive policing, effectively excluding sex talk from the public

⁷ This is not to dismiss the nuances within AIDS research. I recognise that there is a great deal of research on questions of pleasure and desire and written by feminist scholars, which does not emerge from ideas about accessing 'morality'. However, I argue that the majority of AIDS research is based on a biomedical approach to the disease rather than through a gender lens.

discourse. Pornography was banned and legislation prohibited media from broadcasting explicit depictions of sex or any sexual conversation. This draconian policing of sex(uality) was fundamental to the apartheid project to preserve the purity of the white race and a civilised way of life (Posel, 2005: 128). Given these extremities of the apartheid era, Posel argues, “the changes post-1994 have been nothing short of dramatic and remarkably swift” (Posel, 2005: 129).

Following the end of apartheid, debates on sex(uality) were thrust into public prominence in ways that were completely unthinkable and unexpected. Most social and political commentators predicted a difficult transition in South Africa that would be related to issues of race, poverty, inequality and the delivery of basic social services, however the post-apartheid era has been marked by the politicisation of sex(uality) specifically around issues of HIV and AIDS and rape (Posel, 2005: 126). In addition, even though evidence of AIDS was collected in the 1980s⁸, the issue of HIV and AIDS has largely been a post-apartheid problem (Posel, 2005: 133). In 1990, the estimated prevalence of HIV infection in SA was less than 1 percent, yet these figures grew dramatically by the mid-1990s, reaching 22.8 percent by 1998 (Posel, 2005: 133) and the most recent estimate from UNAIDS (2011) finds a 17.3 per cent HIV prevalence rate.

Government silence during Mandela’s presidency and then Mbeki’s ‘denialism’⁹ of the connection between HIV and AIDS are directly correlated to the deepening crisis of HIV and AIDS in the country. Mbeki’s position uncoupled the debate about AIDS from a critical engagement with questions around sex(uality), thereby refusing the invitation to publically ‘talk sex’ as offensive and irrelevant (Posel, 2005: 142). At the same time, due to the neo-liberal leanings of the new ANC-led government, South Africa became open to publication and media that began to refer to sex(uality) in more explicit ways. Media, technology and billboards using hyper-sexualized imagery became more common, which Hames (2012) argues has influenced the awakening of sexual interest among young people. Young people became surrounded by constant messages about

⁸ In 1982, the South African Medical Journal first published an article that mentioned the AIDS epidemic (Tsampiras, 2013).

⁹ Mbeki’s position on HIV and AIDS has not always been clear; but generally, he rejected the Western scientific orthodoxy, in which AIDS is caused by the HIV virus and which in turn is largely transmitted sexually (Posel, 2005: 141).

sex including messages of condomising and 'safe sex' in a context of high rates of HIV and AIDS (Hames, 2012: 65).

In the midst of Mbeki's denialism, NGOs reacted with concern by launching extensive public health education campaigns (to be further discussed later) to 'get the nation talking about sex' (Posel, 2005: 133) and more specifically 'safe sex'. While these campaigns allowed for the creation of more public sites, specifically within formal school settings, to openly discuss sex, conversations were surrounded by panic, fear, and anxieties, thereby missing the chance to explore the holistic aspects of sex (qualities) (Posel, 2005). Similarly, the bulk of HIV and AIDS research and intervention programmes have reduced the virus to a public health and biomedical issue that dismisses the social and cultural complexities of the epidemic (Tamale, 2011: 21-22). These researchers work with quantitative data to make cases for HIV and AIDS behavioural change intervention programs based on theories of individual knowledge, attitudes and reported behaviour as variables. However, HIV cannot be compartmentalised as a disease outside the context of sexual health and rights, gender relations, and socio-economic class, and instead must be studied with an integrated and comprehensive approach (Tamale, 2011: 22).

Simultaneously, the social construction of gender that render men dominant and women subordinate has had a profound influence on the spread of HIV in South Africa (Templeton, 2003a: 5). Gender power dynamics act as a barrier for women to suggest or negotiate condom use and therefore undermines the likelihood of safe sex (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002: 335). Similarly, proving fertility prior to marriage is important to a woman's social status and, thus, condoms are seen as an interference with securing marriage (Templeton, 2003b). At the same time, constructions of men and masculinities – particularly impoverished, black men – as highly sexual beings who are unable to control their sexual desire are common (Posel, 2005). This construction constrains the possibility for men to refuse sex or raise the issue of 'safe sex', because to do so might put their masculine identity at risk (Templeton, 2003b). Thus, the ongoing systems of patriarchy not only continue to privilege men over women, but also impact the spread of HIV (Templeton, 2003a: 6).

Understanding African Sexualities within the 'Dark Continent Discourse'

Arnfred (2004) asks us to re-think sexualities in Africa “beyond the conceptual structure of colonial and even post-colonial European imaginations” that have constructed African sexualities as exotic and something ‘other’. The ‘dark continent discourse’ refers to this mainstream line of thinking around African sexualities that is applied particularly in the context of HIV and AIDS investigations and with the undertone that ‘Africa is lost anyway’ (Arnfred, 2004: 7). This discourse has roots in Enlightenment thought where rationality is contrasted as opposite to passion, emotion, pleasure, and sex(uality) and as a result, a civilised, rational (wo)man must master these feelings and uncontrollable passions (Arnfred, 2004: 18).

Since Enlightenment, these dichotomies and hierarchised binaries (where one is not only separate/different but also above/better than the other) have been used in Western thinking to understand the world (Arnfred, 2004: 8). Therefore, African sexuality is understood and grasped through the Western prejudiced gaze that preaches a sexual morality. The ‘dark continent discourse’ still exists today, especially in regards to government and international aid policies and programmes working to control the HIV and AIDS epidemic. Arnfred (2004) argues, “The ‘dark continent discourse’ is by no means dead and gone. On the contrary, it goes on multiplying, sometimes changing focus, but basically repeating itself; colonial continuities are still with us, reproducing dichotomies” (p. 11).

Tamale (2011), in the introduction to her book *African Sexualities: A Reader*, supplements Arnfred’s work. She writes, “As in all research, studies on sexualities have been motivated by ideological, political, and/or social agendas” (Tamale, 2011: 14). The earliest studies on African sexualities were those written by white colonial explorers and missionaries during the period of imperial expansion and colonisation, in the latter half of the 19th century wherein “African bodies and sexualities became focal points for justifying and legitimising the fundamental objectives of colonialism: to civilise the barbarian and savage natives of the ‘dark continent’ ”(Tamale, 2011: 14). Eroticism and sexuality for colonial men was deeply inscribed in the narratives of colonial imperialism (McClintock, 1995: 24). Colonial narratives equated African sexuality with primitiveness

and the exotic, which were directly juxtaposed to the highly conservative sexual norms of Europe, and which influenced the development discourses in which debates about the management of HIV took place.

At the same time, one must remain careful to avoid the creation of similar dichotomies between an exotic African sexuality and a moralistic Western sexuality. It requires that we further examine the meaning and definition of 'sexuality' in order to deeply engage with what it means to study African sexualities and to establish policies and interventions that target sexual behaviour change. Tamale (2011) asks us to "conceptualise sexuality outside the normative social orders and frameworks that view it through binary oppositions and simplistic labels" (p. 11). Instead, there are various dimensions of sexuality that include sexual knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviours as well as procreation, sexual orientation, and intimate relationships (Tamale, 2011: 12). Sexuality touches nearly every part of our lives as "an all-encompassing phenomenon that involves the human psyche, emotions, physical sensations, communication, creativity and ethics" (Tamale, 2011: 12). Thus, as we grow and change our senses of sexuality, desires and pleasures are simultaneously transforming.

Public Health Interventions: 'Safe Sex' Campaigns

Nevertheless, notions around sexual morality were (re)produced and (re)constructed in the 1990s during a time of fear about the spread of HIV and AIDS in Africa when it became apparent that the virus was spreading at an unprecedented speed and in populations other than those considered high risk (Tamale, 2011). Public health professionals and medical anthropologists flocked to Africa to find and explore prevention measures, but in reality resurrected "the colonial mode of studying sexuality in Africa – racist, moralistic, paternalistic and steeped in liberal thinking" (Tamale, 2011: 21). In the process of working to curb the spread of HIV and AIDS, Western researchers engendered a profound 're-medicalisation' of African sexualities. The colonial representation of an African sexuality has been echoed in Western HIV and AIDS research, and as a result has laid the foundation for flawed prevention policies. According to Stillwaggon (2003):

“Western preconceptions regarding African sexualities distorted early research on the social context of AIDS in Africa and limited the scope of preventative policies. Key works cited repeatedly in the social science and policy literature constructed a hypersexualized pan-African culture as the main reason for the high prevalence of HIV in sub-Saharan Africa” (p. 809).

Many studies conducted on HIV and AIDS have tended to reinforce notions of rational human behaviour and the idea that sex(uality) and therefore AIDS reflect some forms of irrationality (Motsemme, 2007: 63). It assumes the linearity between knowledge of risk and sexual behaviour change (Baxen and Breidlid, 2004: 11) and informs the majority of AIDS research and public health interventions. Consequently, the majority of AIDS research has failed to explore the complexities of African sexualities and therefore can be viewed as a ‘wasted decade of AIDS research’ (Tamale, 2011: 21). Since research informs public health and development interventions, it can be argued that it has also been a ‘wasted decade of AIDS funding’. HIV and AIDS research, and concurrently HIV and AIDS interventions, has been engulfed in what Tamale (2011) terms ‘the ever-growing commodification of sexual health’ (p. 22). The HIV and AIDS epidemic has become a multibillion-dollar industry for international aid organisations, national and international governments, and pharmaceutical companies. These HIV and AIDS programmes and interventions have allowed the exotic and primitive interpretations of African sexualities by Western scholars to be taken to a new level as researchers and programmatic planners continue to turn a blind eye to the comprehensive nature of sex and sexualities (Tamale, 2011). Thus, HIV and AIDS and sex(uality) interventions in South Africa cannot be separated from global power relations that (re)produce and (re)create a Western moral sexual being.

In the case of South Africa, HIV and AIDS was integrated into the national agenda with the funding assistance of international donor agencies such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.¹⁰ Since 2003, the Global Fund has given over USD \$438 million to various South African government agencies and NGOs to respond to the AIDS epidemic (The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, 2013). With this funding, South African government agencies have instituted programmes to provide

¹⁰ From now on, I will refer to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria as ‘The Global Fund’.

ARV treatment, offer care for people living with AIDS, support community-based responses, and implement HIV prevention programmes, such as peer education. Young people have been the largest target group for HIV prevention programmes given that most new HIV infection occurs among this group (LeClerc-Madlala, 2001).

Simultaneously, many NGOs have mounted extensive public health education campaigns to increase awareness about the transmission of HIV and AIDS through 'safe sex' campaigns. These campaigns work to bring conversations about sex out in the open in order to stimulate a national dialogue about sex(uality) and HIV and AIDS (Posel, 2005: 133). The most prominent of these campaigns has been organised by loveLife, which are 'the most expensive of their kind in the world' (Posel, 2005: 133) and utilise a number of strategies including billboards, television and radio campaigns, a telephone helpline, and peer education programmes to appeal to young people. Hunter (2010) explains that loveLife "typifies a response to AIDS that links rights and intimacy in ways that appeal most to socially mobile young people" (p. 206) by making 'safe sex' "cool".

Yet, loveLife lacked a deep engagement with the impact of gender constructs on HIV transmission (Templeton, 2003b). In her study to deconstruct loveLife's relation to gender, Templeton (2003b) found that "loveLife's constructions of gender are both narrow and problematic". She found that women are represented as either responsible for sexual relations or as victims of their own passivity while men are either 'highly sexual beings' or have succumbed to the directive of their female partners (Templeton, 2003b). In this way, loveLife represents sexual decision-making in a manner that assumes fully rational individual behaviour (Templeton, 2003b). As Posel (2005) explains:

"Sexuality is presented as a site of rational, individual choice and agency – an opportunity for empowerment and 'healthy positive living'. And the health education campaign is an effort to constitute an essentially modern sexual subject, one who is knowledgeable, responsible, in control, and free to make informed choices" (p. 134).

Because loveLife operates under the belief that the modern, rational self can practice 'safe sex' with proper information and education, its messages represent a heteronormative value system that dictates sexual behaviour as either 'good' or 'bad'

and in effect provides little in the way of challenging dominant gender constructs (Templeton, 2003b).

Further, the 'safe sex' discourse that is premised on rational sexual decision-making ignores the realities and multiple identities of young people in South Africa. In Motsemme's (2007) study she moves beyond a biomedical analysis of HIV and AIDS to explore other aspects of young women's lives that have been shaped by this epidemic: physical and spiritual uprootedness, economic survival, constancy of death experiences, and the desire for intimacy. She describes how sex, and in most cases unsafe sex, "may be a way of sustaining a sense of meaning in the face of meaninglessness" (Motsemme, 2007: 83). In her argument against hegemonic notions of rational human behaviour, Motsemme asks if "so-called risky [sexual] behaviour cannot be conceptualized as anti-rational when everything meaningful in one's life disappears?" (Motsemme, 2007: 64). In this way, she asks us to consider that the way in which young women negotiate their sexualities in a context of high rates of HIV and AIDS can be seen as an empowering moment. Within constrained economic circumstances, young women are left with their bodies as a space to negotiate agency in their lives (Motsemme, 2007: 83).

Motsemme's (2007) findings reveal that even when knowledge is readily available it does not necessarily lead to sexual behaviour change. South Africans construct their sexual identities and behaviour in terms of competing knowledge systems and within contexts that (re)produce and send conflicting messages to young people (Baxen and Breidlid, 2004). These scholars illustrate how HIV prevention programmes must move beyond a sexual moral discourse premised on rational decision-making and instead take local contexts and gendered aspects of sexuality into consideration.

Sex(uality) Peer Education Programmes

This section aims to provide context and background to sex(uality) peer education programmes for young people in South Africa. I first focus on how the government has attempted to address the HIV and AIDS epidemic through the establishment and delivery of sex(uality) education programmes at the secondary school level. Then, I investigate what it means to use peer education as a strategy to deliver sex(uality)

education. In conclusion, I discuss the possibilities of a sex(uality) education that is based on feminist principles and teachings.

Meanings of Delivery

Sex(uality) education was first introduced in South Africa in direct response to the HIV and AIDS epidemic. In 1995, the South African Department of Education, in conjunction with the Department of Health and Welfare, began work on developing a National Policy on HIV and AIDS Education (Visser, 2005: 206). The policy was designed to respond to the HIV and AIDS epidemic by creating and implementing HIV and AIDS and sex(uality) education as part of Life Orientation classes, which became compulsory in all government schools in 1998 (Department of Education, 1999).

Thaver and Leao (2012) found that the implementation of the government's national plan 'has been problematic' (p. 89). Given the socio-economic inequalities in the education system, there were obvious flaws with the government's programme: schools in poorer communities lacked the resources to provide adequate training for teachers and teachers were familiar with a didactic style of teaching which wasn't compatible with the content and goals of the HIV and AIDS and sex(uality) education programme. In order to resolve these issues, in 2002 the government introduced a new policy called Curriculum 2005 that aimed to promote a more engaging teaching style for the delivery of sex(uality) education. The Minister of Education at the time, Professor Kader Asmal, expressed the department's commitment to curbing the escalation of HIV and AIDS:

"Since my ministry declared HIV and AIDS a priority three years ago, we have mandated as part of Curriculum 2005, a programme of life skills and HIV and AIDS in all our schools... We cannot afford to be slack about this. The lives of children may depend on the education we can give them in this area" (Asmal, 2002: 5).

Despite the department's efforts, the curriculum being implemented continued to highlight information about HIV and AIDS to the detriment of other life skills that would enable learners to develop 'healthy life skills' (Thaver and Leao, 2012: 87).

Simultaneously, the resource-poor context within which many township schools operated meant that a number of obstacles, such as inadequate teacher training,

insufficient material and staff shortages, made it difficult for the government to enforce the new curriculum (Thaver and Leao, 2012: 88). An on-going teacher training is essential for the effective implementation of the life skills programme, yet there were substantial shortcomings with the government's implementation, such as insufficient time dedicated to life orientation, lack of support from colleagues, and feelings of isolation among teachers (Ahmed, 2006: 629). In response, government officials were open to new ways of thinking about HIV and sex(uality) education and began to collaborate with NGO partners to implement peer education programmes. As a result, the meaning of delivery began to take on a new meaning, as NGOs became the service deliverer, rather than government agencies.

Simultaneously, by housing sex(uality) education within a formal educational setting much tension and uncertainty was created. As Fine (2005) comments, "We recognize, for instance, that trying to wedge thick notions of sex education into the constricted space of public education was a mistake" (p. 58). Even though NGOs began to deliver sex(uality) peer education, the programmes were still conducted in South African township schools in which learners were subject to didactic teaching and authoritarian school rules, which prevented any kind of autonomy or the ability to challenge gender norms by learners. In his research of schools-based sex(uality) education programmes in Southern and Eastern Africa, Pattman (2006) argues that schools are not gender-neutral institutions. Instead, the school space recreates gender differences where girls are quiet and boys loud; women teachers are seen as caring and male teachers as authoritarian and sexually aggressive. He argues that teachers need to relate to learners in ways, which do not (re)produce these gender-polarised constructions (Pattman, 2006: 109). This would also require sex(uality) education programmes to prioritise a strong teacher training that is centred on gender sensitive teaching. Alternatively, he argues that peer education could be an effective strategy given that there is less of an age and power hierarchy. However, Pattman (2006) notes that any outside intervention may not be available or be unreliable in the long-term basis due to reliance on donor funding (p. 110).

The effect of donor-reliance was obvious in the case of loveLife's interventions. In 2005, the Global Fund withdrew a USD \$56 million grant to loveLife because it failed to

convince the fund's board that its programmes were having a direct effect on the spread of the disease (Frank, 2006). Global Fund spokesman Jon Liden explained that it had become difficult to measure how the prevention campaign was contributing to the reduction of HIV and AIDS among young people (IRIN Africa, 2005). Liden's statement illustrates donor preoccupations with measuring impact based on the assumption that providing young people with sufficient knowledge about HIV and AIDS will enable them to make informed decisions regarding their sexual practices and behaviors (Baxen and Breidlid, 2004). The funding cut is also notable because it sheds light on the limiting factors of donor funding, and what happens to HIV prevention programmes once a donor ends funding. I will return to the case study of loveLife, specifically its peer education programme because of the programme's parallels with that of SHEA's.

Peer Education as a Strategy

In the following section, I explore case studies on sex(uality) peer education interventions to unpack how peer education has become the key participatory strategy in the HIV prevention field. Sex(uality) peer education programmes were hailed as powerful tools to stop the spread of HIV transmission since peers would give messages that lead to change in sexual behaviour. Peer education is defined as "involving the training and use of individuals from the target group to educate and support their peers" (Visser, 2007: 680). It works under the assumption that behaviour is socially influenced and that behavioural norms are developed through interaction with peers (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002). Under the belief of its efficacy, in Africa 60 percent of major HIV prevention NGOs carry out peer education programmes (Kelly et al., 2006).

In the case of South Africa, the peer education approach to HIV prevention became fashionable and trendy (Jewkes, 2013). Even though peer educational approaches increased in both popularity and practice, there is still little known about the processes and mechanisms underlying the successes and failures of the approach (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002). As Turner and Shepherd (1999) explain "peer education would seem to be a method in search of theory rather than the application of theory to practice" (p. 235). There is also a level of irony in using peers to teach learners how to think critically. Regis (1996) finds, "Isn't there something a little odd about trying to use

young people's susceptibility to peer influence in these programmes, when resistance to social influence from peers is at least part of the message?" (p. 78). Additionally, in the case of using peer education to promote safe sex practices, there is no way that learners could know if their peers were practicing the behaviour they were supposed to be modelling since there were limited opportunities to observe modelled sexual behaviour (Turner and Shepherd, 1999). Thus, due to a lack of a strong theoretical base for peer education, the majority of existing research into peer education tends to rely on quantitative evaluations of the outcome of interventions.

One such study is that by Campbell and MacPhail (2002), which investigates a schools-based peer education programme in a South African township school near Johannesburg. They argue that the development of critical thinking and empowerment¹¹ are key preconditions for the success of a peer education programme. In their study, they found that these preconditions were never met because of peer educators' preference for didactic methods and biomedical frameworks, unequal gender dynamics among peer educators, and negative learner attitudes to the programme (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002: 331). Peer education by its nature presupposes a participatory teaching approach, yet peer educators lacked the critical thinking skills to promote discussions that empowered learners to challenge gender norms and transform their socio-economic context (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002: 341). Their findings also revealed that peer education programmes couldn't be designed in silo from the broader socio-economic realities of learners' lives. For instance, they point to factors such as limited opportunities to communicate about sex(uality) outside of the peer educational setting, poor adult role models of healthy sexual relationships, poverty and unemployment, and poor community facilities. Most importantly for this research, findings pointed to the need for peer education programmes "to contain very explicit and focused materials promoting discussions of the impact of gender relations on sexual health" (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002: 342).

In addition, Visser (2007) has contributed much research to the field of peer education and HIV and AIDS prevention strategies in South Africa. In 2007, she conducted an

¹¹ The concept of 'empowerment' has various meanings and understandings. I use it here to focus on the emotional or motivational dimensions, conceptualising it in terms of a sense of confidence and ability to act given structural constraints (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002).

evaluation of peer education programmes in Tshwane, South Africa. Her study found that peer education “can be regarded as an appropriate strategy to deal with HIV prevention, especially for young people, since they discuss personal issues, have informal relationships and speak a common language” (Visser, 2007: 693). The strength of the programme was found in the enthusiasm and commitment of peer educators who reported personal growth, developed a greater understanding of themselves and others and felt empowered to ‘make a difference’ in the lives of other people (Visser, 2007: 686). At the same time, Visser (2007) points out that peer education should not be seen as a magic potion or cure-all intervention. Instead, it can only function effectively amidst other interventions and needs resources from various levels of the local and donor community to function optimally. Thus, peer education cannot be thought of as existing in a ‘social vacuum’, but requires a healthy social and community environment that is conducive to the health behaviour patterns that peer educators promote (Visser, 2007: 692). She also recommends that teachers should be more involved in the programme. Where teachers were involved, peer educators could run the programme effectively, compared to schools where the teachers were not supportive.

This research is also critically engaged with the work of Mason-Jones, Mathews, and Flisher (2011) who conducted a quantitative study in 2006 to evaluate the effectiveness of a peer education program in public high schools in the Western Cape. They recruited Grade 10 students from 30 secondary schools that were receiving peer education from different ‘implementing organisations’. Lorna¹², SHEA’s CEO, informed me that SHEA was included as a peer education ‘implementing organisation’ for this study, which made this study especially pertinent. Lorna explained that SHEA was not pleased with the negative findings, which were “unable to detect a significant difference in the age of sexual debut, use of condoms at last sex, goal orientation, decision-making or future orientation for students in the intervention group as compared to students in the comparison group” (Mason-Jones et al., 2011: 1605). The study even found that students in the intervention group were more likely to start having sex, which may be because there were more opportunities for sex that occurred as a result of the intervention (Mason-Jones et al., 2011: 1609). Similar to Visser (2007) and Campbell

¹² All names have been changed to pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of research participants and to respect their confidentiality.

and MacPhail (2002), Mason-Jones et al. (2011) emphasise the importance of the socio-economic context within which peer education programmes must operate. For instance, gender issues and unsupportive school climates can undermine these programmes (Mason-Jones et al., 2011: 1610).

I also engaged with the studies of Lesko (2007) and Hunter (2010) on loveLife's peer education programmes. In her study, Lesko (2007) examined the discourses that youth used to narrate their involvement, satisfactions and difficulties as peer educators or groundBreakers (GBs) with loveLife. Her main findings include: 1) loveLife promotes positive sexuality within a broader agenda of rational life development – “that is, the making of ‘modern sexual subjects’, who are knowledgeable, responsible, in control and free to make informed choices” (Lesko, 2007: 527); 2) GBs are ‘conflicted selves’ by experiencing “conflicts arising out of personal and social experiences with competing views and knowledge about themselves” (Lesko, 2007: 529); and 3) sexual self-regulation has become the site for the ‘rational regulation of desire’ which merges moral reflexivity with a responsiveness to injunctions of rational, responsible behaviour (Lesko, 2007: 530). Hunter (2010) also found that GBs were ‘conflicted selves’ as they told stories of motivation and resistance to peer pressure to managers or donors, but in spaces outside of the youth centre, these same GBs confessed that several times they ignored loveLife's core messages and didn't always use condoms (Hunter, 2010: 209).

These case studies on peer education programmes in South Africa emphasise that sex(uality) peer education programmes are always ‘interventions-in-context’ (Cornish and Campbell, 2009). Peer education programmes repeatedly centre on young people's knowledge of HIV and AIDS while neglecting the “deeply discursive situated contexts where people come to know” (Baxen and Breidlid, 2004: 24). Thus, the interplay of gender and socio-economic conditions powerfully shape HIV prevention programmes and cannot be discounted. Similarly, peer educators inhabit a particular space between striving to become a rational modern sexual being and understanding the limitations and challenges with the socio-economic context and social constructions of gender.

A Feminist Sex(uality) Education?

Ideally, peer educational settings should provide the space and context within which young people can construct identities that challenge the ways in which traditional gender relations put their sexual health at risk (Campbell and Jovchelovitch, 2000). Social identities then become the tools to create social change. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the possibilities for sex(uality) peer education programmes to include feminist content that is both gender-focused and lends itself to critical thinking. The concepts of 'doing' and 'undoing' gender allow for a deeper examination of how students comply with or resist feminist principals. In the process of 'undoing' gendered constructions of sexuality new femininities and masculinities are articulated in relation to learner's understandings of sex(uality). Unfortunately, the majority of sex(uality) education programmes (re)produce gender and sexual inequalities through its content and delivery approach (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002; Fine and McClelland, 2006; Garcia, 2009).

It is especially essential that HIV prevention programmes address gender inequalities as they play a key role in driving the HIV epidemic among young people and particularly among young women. These programmes need to challenge social norms of gendered behaviour by taking on the idea of dominance of men and submission of women (Jewkes, 2013). A central part of how we learn to be sexual involves learning how we are expected to perform as gendered beings. Yet, most sex(uality) education programmes across geographical locations leave out questions of gender and power dynamics as these programmes are influenced by moral conservatism and traditional views on sex(uality) (Jewkes, 2013).

These traditional views on sex(uality) form the basis of one of the key feminist critiques of traditional sex(uality) education, which is founded on the gender binaries that form the basis for how 'safe sex' is taught to students (Jackson and Weatherall, 2010). Gender binaries reinforce heterosexuality and coital sex while leaving out non-penetrative sexual activities as a way to have 'safe sex'. From a feminist standpoint focused on pleasure, power, and safer sex, a focus on coital sex directly challenges egalitarian sexual relationships and female sexual empowerment through an emphasis on male needs rather than other forms of sexual pleasure (e.g. oral sex, masturbation, touching). Alternative definitions of 'sex' provide safer means of having sex, however, they are

frequently omitted in discussions of HIV, STIs, and unwanted pregnancy (Ingham, 2005: 382).

Jackson and Weatherall (2010) conducted valuable research on the (im)possibilities of feminist sex(uality) education by investigating instances of its practices in New Zealand. Their research paints a complex picture of the challenges and opportunities of introducing feminist content into sex(uality) education, where on some occasions, 'educators' attempts to 'undo' gendered constructions of sexuality were countered by participants 'doing' them" (Jackson and Weatherall, 2010: 180). One example of this 'undoing' occurred when educators' opened the discussion to non-coital sex only to find meanings of sex produced within a coital imperative. However, there were also moments when an educator's 'undoing' gender sparked an enlightening moment wherein participants became aware that gender and sexuality could be 'done' differently. Jackson and Weatherall (2010) found these moments occurred when girls understood that they had a right 'to say no' and 'to enjoy sex' (p. 180).

At the same time, the researchers explain that they acknowledged the substantive cultural barriers to writing a feminist discourse of pleasure and desire into the sex(uality) education curriculum. These teachings raise public anxieties about young people's sexualities and therefore, the topic must be treated with awareness (Vance, 1992). In particular, adolescent girls are bombarded with contradictory messages about a women's sexuality. They are surrounded by popular culture images of the post-feminist girl for whom sex is 'fun' and 'sexy' while also being drowned in a sea of cautions, responsibilities, and restraints about their sexualities. Thus, Jackson and Weatherall (2010) find that "safety and pleasure are not mutually exclusive" (p. 181) but instead are mutually constitutive based on the notion that when girls know and experience their own bodies in terms of pleasure they are not only better equipped to experience enjoyable sex but also to resist unwanted or unsafe sexual encounters.

While there is a great need for feminist sex(uality) education programmes, Jackson and Weatherall (2010) emphasise that moral conservatism in broader society, regarding sexuality and gender, is a continuing influence that cannot be ignored. The researchers are acutely aware that "unless gender challenges are mounted across multiple cultural

sites, critical sexuality education may meet as much with resistance as acceptance” (p. 180). Again, sex(uality) peer education must be seen as an ‘intervention-in-context’ (Cornish and Campbell, 2009).

Similarly, Garcia’s research (2009) into the ways in which heteronormativity, sexism and racism play into the sex(uality) education of Latina youth offered useful insights into the limitations of sex(uality) education programmes in terms of challenging racial, class, gender and sexual hierarchies. She found that some Latina youth “encountered racialized and heterogendered constructions and experiences that limit their access to sex-education-related information and reinforce existing inequalities” (p. 520). Latina youth in her study were taught that they had no control over disrupting gender inequalities, therefore, her findings point to how sex(uality) education can be a disempowering experience for young Latina women as notions of heteronormativity, racism, and sexism are (re)produced and normalised rather than being a space for young women to actively challenge gender inequalities.

Though these two studies are situated in New Zealand and the US with vastly different socio-economic contexts, their findings offer a helpful framework to understand how the SHEA peer education programme engages with the (un)doing of gender and sex(uality) norms and constructions.

This chapter has discussed how the HIV and AIDS epidemic and response has come to define sex(uality) in South Africa as something that must be constantly controlled and feared rather than explored and desired. What is particularly evident is the ways in which notions of a rational sexuality play a central role in how researchers and development partners understand and plan programmes to prevent the spread of the HIV and AIDS epidemic, specifically peer education programmes. This, along with the lack of a feminist approach to sex(uality) education programmes, raises a number of questions that have informed my research process;

- 1) What are the experiences of peer educators and peer facilitators in teaching a sex(uality) peer education programme? How do peer educators and peer facilitators define their roles and negotiate their identities as both individuals

and peers? How can peer education programmes increase understandings about the social construction of gender relevant to HIV and AIDS among PFs, PEs and learners.

- 2) What is the experience of an NGO in implementing an HIV prevention programme? How does NGO staff (re)gain agency in the face of donor constraints?

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the overall methodology that informed my research process. I first explain the feminist theory and framework that allowed this research to be ‘uniquely feminist’. Then, I present and explain the qualitative methodology adopted in this dissertation, the methods used, and my approach to thematic analysis. I conclude the chapter by discussing how my positionality informed my research.

Feminist Theory and Framework

This dissertation is grounded in a feminist research approach that tackles issues from the perspective that gender and patriarchy are political forces that are central to the way that societies organise themselves and to the way that individuals understand their choices and behaviour. A feminist framework explores how gender differences and inequalities are constructed and perpetrated through institutions, attitudes, and opportunities. Brayton (1997) defines feminist research as:

“...uniquely feminist because it is feminist beliefs and concerns that act as the guiding framework to the research process. Methodologically, feminist research differs from traditional research for three reasons. It actively seeks to remove the power imbalances between research and subject; it is politically motivated and has a major role in changing social inequality; and it begins with the standpoints and experiences of women” (p. 4).

This section explains how this research dissertation is ‘uniquely feminist’ using the definition offered by Brayton. First, I was intimately aware of the importance of restructuring the unequal power relationship between researcher and subject. To

dissolve the divide between us, I attempted to focus on my similarities with the participants as NGO workers (with SHEA staff) and as a young sexual person (with PFs and PEs) rather than our more obvious race, class, and nationality differences. It was also significant that I created a warm, comfortable environment for the interviews and focus group discussions. I found that these approaches were successful. For example, when the PEs spoke about their passions and visions for the future, they turned the question around and asked me, which both surprised and excited me. I saw this as a sign that they began to see me as one of them, a sexual young person with hopes and aspirations.

Second, feminist research “must not be abstract and removed from the subject of investigation but instead must have a commitment to working towards societal change” (Brayton, 1997: 6). It is for this reason that I grounded this research in the work of SHEA, a local NGO, which identified this research as a tool to gain evidence of the impact of its peer education programme. It is the hope that this research can serve SHEA in the way in which it constructs its sex(uality) peer education programme in the future and the way in which it understands its relationship with donor entities. Further, the research has provided insight into my work as Co-founder and Deputy Executive Director of the Girl Up Initiative Uganda, which conducts sex(uality) education programmes in Kampala, Uganda. The findings from this research project have informed mine and my colleagues’ decisions as we grow and expand the organisation. It has allowed us to investigate whether it would be beneficial to include a peer education aspect to the programme and has raised important questions around the meaning of teaching sex(uality) education and the role of donor funding and involvement.

I diverge from Brayton’s third definition that feminist research must take young women’s location and standpoint in the world as the basis for research. I acknowledge that women’s lives, experiences, ideas, and needs have been absent from social science research because we live in a world which values male knowledge and perspective (Brayton, 1997). However, I included the lived experiences of young men because their performativity of masculine norms are significant to the ways in which young women experience sex(uality) and sexual relations. While this was not the original intention, Lorna suggested that I include the experiences of young men. After some reflection, I

decided that this inclusion was important to the research since Gender Studies must also take seriously the lived experiences of men. Nevertheless, this research was centred on questions of gender as I infused the interviews and focus group discussions with questions around gender assumptions and knowledge. Even though the study did not find that the programme had a deep engagement with questions of gender, it is my hope that the findings can encourage SHEA to take gender seriously as it continues to implement this and other programmes.

Research Methodology

Methodology is necessary to justify the methods used in the research project. According to Carter and Little (2007), methodology is “the description, the explanation and the justification of methods, not the methods themselves” (p. 1317). Methodology is also less concerned with the product of the research in exchange for a deeper engagement with the process by which the research is conducted (Carter and Little, 2007). In this way, methods produce the data, which is then transformed into knowledge through data analysis. In accordance with this definition of methodology, I used a qualitative methodology, which used the stories and accounts of participants as the primary data.

Participants

The main source of data was collected from three semi-structured individual interviews with SHEA key management staff: Lorna, CEO; Thando, Programme Manager (PM); and Fezile, Programme Coordinator (PC). All staff had worked on the sex(uality) peer education programme since its inception and Fezile was a peer facilitator before he was promoted to Programme Coordinator.

The data was also informed by two focus group discussions with four peer facilitators (one young woman, three young men) and four peer educators (three young women, one young man) conducted outside SHEA’s mobile clinic and inside its office in Makhaza, Khayelitsha respectively. While I requested to have an equal number of men and women participants, various external reasons hampered these plans. For example, on the day of the PE focus group discussion, there were heavy rains in Khayelitsha,

which made transportation to the SHEA office challenging for participants. In order to encourage participation and create an informal environment, I brought lunch for all focus group participants.

All of the participants of the focus groups were black, isiXhosa-speaking youth, between the ages of 18 and 35 years of age¹³.

Peer Facilitators

Sisipho: Female, 24 years old

Mibono: Male, 24 years old

Nyaniso: Male, 31 years old

Lihle: Male, 35 years old

Peer Educators

Andisiwe: Female, 18 years old

Akhona: Female, 21 years old

Kholiwe: Female, 20 years old

Vuyani: Male, 22 years old

All eight participants worked with SHEA for at least a year, either as a peer facilitator or peer educator. All participants were living in Khayelitsha, one of the poorest townships in Cape Town and a 'hotspot' for international development aid. As Lorna (CEO) explained, "*Khayelitsha is a hotspot. Let's be honest. People from America or whoever, if they hear 'Khayelitsha'... 'Uh, Khayelitsha' you know.*"

Khayelitsha (*Xhosa* for 'new home') is a formal/informal township in the Western Cape, located on the Cape Flats that was officially established in 1983 under the apartheid regime. Today, the township is characterised by high levels of unemployment, poverty, HIV prevalence, sexual abuse and rape, gangsterism, and crime. Khayelitsha has an estimated population of over 1 million people and is considered to be the second largest township in South Africa after Soweto in Johannesburg (Bade, 2005). It also has the highest HIV prevalence rate in the city of Cape Town at 33.1 percent. When compared to

¹³ There were two reasons for choosing participants ages 18 and older. First, in terms of ethical regulations, working with participants under the age of 18 requires signed consent from their guardians, which could be difficult and slow down the research process. Second, there would be a smaller age gap between me and the participants, which allowed for the building of rapport as a peer.

the Western Cape prevalence rate of 17.3 percent, the inequality in HIV prevalence rates is stark (City Health HIV, Aids, STI and TB Plan 2012/2013). Additionally, results from the 2001 South African census illustrate a significantly young age distribution with 29.6 percent of people aged 14 years or younger and 75 percent of the population under the age of 35 (Information and Knowledge Management Department, 2005: 11). The majority of adults aged 20 and above have at least some secondary education (41 per cent of men, and 46 per cent of women), however only 18 per cent of men and 21 per cent of women matriculated from secondary school (Information and Knowledge Management Department, 2005: 16). In addition, unemployment rates are high at 51 per cent of the economically active population (Information and Knowledge Management Department, 2005: 29). With limited educational and economic opportunities, many youth become involved in gangsterism and crime rings and teenage pregnancy rates are high.

Interviews

The data was collected through three individual in-depth semi-structured interviews, as well as two focus group discussions. All interviews and focus groups were voice recorded with participant consent. I conducted semi-structured interviews with three key SHEA staff members, Lorna, Thando, and Fezile with the initial goal of deepening my understanding of the structure and content of the sex(uality) peer education programme. The first interview with Lorna in April 2013 provided me with general information and background on SHEA's sex(uality) peer education programme. Lorna then introduced me to Thando who invited me to come to the Khayelitsha office in May 2013. At the conclusion of his interview, he introduced me to Fezile for another interview. The interviews offered detailed accounts and insights into the challenges of a donor-funded programme and how staff navigated this constrained space. Thus, as I began my data analysis it became apparent that these interviews would serve as more than merely background information and would instead serve as a theme for my analysis on the meaning of delivering a sex(uality) education programme.

All interviews were held in familiar spaces for the participants¹⁴, which allowed them to feel comfortable and relaxed. This qualitative approach to data collection enabled me as a researcher to “study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of and interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them” (Moen, 2006: 5). By interviewing them in their office space, I experienced the work environment and saw how the end of the funding had affected the morale of staff members.

I was aware that participants would assign meaning to their experiences through the stories they tell and answers they provide (Moen, 2006). Therefore, interview questions were semi-structured and open-ended, usually framed by the words “can you tell me about?”, “what do you feel about?” or “have there been any occasions when?” This loosely structured approach allowed for the exploration of the subjective experience of participants (Watts, 2006). Yet, this type of open questioning also required careful management to maintain the focus of the inquiry and ensure that direction and relevance were not lost (Watts, 2006). I often had to return to my guiding themes to stay on track, which were as follows: 1) Content of Programme; 2) Structure of Programme; and 3) Challenges/Successes.

Focus Group Discussions

In addition, I organised two focus group discussions with former peer facilitators and peer educators. The focus group method was the desired method because it made it possible for me, as a feminist researcher to: 1) observe the interactive processes of social interaction; 2) transform the balance of power between researcher and participant; and 3) facilitate the creation of collective testimony as an empowering experience (Madriz, 2000). First, the group setting invited participants to disagree and debate with one another as well as decide the direction and content of the discussion. For example, the PFs began a conversation around cases of sexual harassment cases, which was an area of the research that I had not previously considered.

¹⁴ I conducted Lorna’s interview in SHEA’s Parow office and Thando and Fezile’s interviews in SHEA’s Khayelitsha office.

As a feminist researcher, I also wanted to minimize the separation between the participants and myself, which was difficult given my separation in terms of class, race, and nationality. Therefore, it was my hope that the focus group method would limit the imposition of my own ideas and beliefs in the discussions and instead would amplify the voices of the participants (Madriz, 2000: 840). As opposed to one-on-one interviews wherein the researcher usually dominates the research process and questions, the focus group method allowed participants to control the direction and depth of the discussion (Madriz, 2000: 836). Even though I had three guiding themes: 1) Personal experience of being a PF/PE; 2) Programme Structure and Curriculum; and 3) Hopes for the Future, questions were semi-structured to allow for the room for participants to insert their own dialogues, stories, and knowledge.

Finally, the multivocality of the focus group situation validated the experience of the participants with other participants of similar socio-economic, age and racial backgrounds (Madriz, 2000: 841). It created the environment in which participants felt comfortable to tell their stories and share knowledge. The use of focus groups then became a form of collective testimony wherein the awareness that others faced similar problems had the potential of raising consciousness among participants that their problems were not just individual but structural (Madriz, 2000: 842). In this case, participants became aware that many of the problems they faced were a result of the structural inequalities that exist in urban South African townships.

In sum, the focus group method enabled me to conduct feminist research wherein the balance of power was tilted from the researcher to the group and participants had the space to understand their own stories and knowledge within the larger collective experience. As Madriz (2000) eloquently noted, “the collective nature of the group interview empowers the participants and validates their voices and experiences” (p. 838). This approach is in direct opposition to other peer education studies based on quantitative methods that focus on self-reported sexual behaviour and choices.

Thematic Analysis

After the process of transcribing data¹⁵, I began the process of thematic analysis within a feminist theoretical framework. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), “thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (p. 79). This method of analysis was most appropriate for my research as it allowed me to be flexible and open to the data. Given that my research question focused on exploring the experiences of PFs and PEs, I aimed to give voice¹⁶ to the participants rather than focus narrowly on a commitment to method. Therefore, I took an inductive approach, wherein the themes identified were strongly driven by the data (Patton, 1990). I listened to the stories and dialogues of participants and then coded the data to find patterns that would form the basis of my main themes.

I followed the six phases of thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006): 1) familiarising myself with the data; 2) generating initial codes; 3) searching for themes; 4) reviewing themes; 5) defining and naming themes; and 6) producing the report. These phases enabled me to immerse myself in the data to create the most appropriate themes that would relate back to the research question and literature. The analysis process started when I began to notice patterns of meaning and issues of potential interest in the data during data collection and during the transcription process. Writing, then, was an integral part of the analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 87) as I jotted down ideas and potential themes after each interview and focus group discussion. In phase two, I began to generate initial codes. Since my thematic analysis was data-driven, I was open to the creation of themes that moved beyond my initial thematic assumptions. Phase three enabled me to analyse the codes and consider how they combined to form overarching themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 89). Under the suggestion of my co-supervisor, I found it useful to create mind-maps so I could play around with organising smaller themes into my main overarching themes and sub-themes within them. Once I reviewed my themes, it became clear which themes needed to be combined, refined or discarded (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 90). During phase four, I reviewed and refined the themes and then in phase five I named each theme to give the reader a sense of the main

¹⁵ I transcribed all data for the coupled reason of financial cost and to assist with data analysis. I sought to be as detailed as possible during the transcribing process and included intonations when participants emphasised specific points.

¹⁶ Though I use the term ‘give voice’, I am aware that it is impossible to ‘give voice’ to participants. As Fine (2002) argues, even the ‘giving voice’ approach “involves carving out unacknowledged pieces of narrative evidence that we select, edit, and deploy to border our arguments” (p. 218).

objective of the theme (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 91-92). Finally, the process of writing the analysis required that I tell the complicated story of my data in a concise, coherent and logical way.

Throughout the research process I remained open to changes in the focus of the study because as Silverman (2001) writes, “the beauty of qualitative research is that its rich data can lead to the opportunity to change focus during the data analysis process” (p. 80). With a data-driven thematic approach, I intended for the process to be led by the participants rather than by my analytic preconceptions. For instance, when I began the research process, I did not foresee my initial interviews with SHEA management staff to become a significant part of the data analysis. However, as the research project progressed I realised, with the assistance of my supervisors, that the information I obtained from these interviews would form the basis of an analysis chapter.

Ethics

I am aware of the complex nature of research related to HIV prevention programmes. Particularly in relation to SHEA’s previous experience with UCT researchers, I was familiar with the way in which the organisation felt betrayed and humiliated by the research findings. Thus, I was primarily concerned with designing and conducting research, which ensured that participants were not made more vulnerable by my research or its products (Anthropology Southern Africa, 2005).

The ethical consideration for this dissertation was informed by the University of Cape Town’s ‘Code for Research Involving Human Subjects’. It allowed me to ensure that participants were treated ethically and with respect. Below, I highlight the most relevant aspects for this research:

“Participation in research requires informed, uncoerced, consent of participants. Researchers should inform participants, in language they can understand, of the aims and implications of the research project and of any other considerations, which might reasonably be expected to influence their willingness to participate. Researchers should respect the right of individuals to refuse to participate in research and to withdraw their participation without prejudice to them at any stage. Researchers must protect participants against foreseeable physical, psychological or social harm or suffering which might be experienced in the

course of the research. Information obtained in the course of research which may reveal the identity of a participant is confidential unless the participant agrees to its release" (UCT Code for Research Involving Human Subjects).

In line with the UCT Ethical Code, I drafted a detailed consent form that stipulated the nature of the research, the sensitivity of the topic and the rights of the participants to remain anonymous and to withdraw at any stage of the research process. Before each interview and focus group, I verbally explained to the participants the aims of the research. It was important that I was clear that I was not employed by SHEA to conduct the research; therefore, they were free to be open and honest about their experiences.

Most participants allowed for the release of their names, however, after further thought about the implications, I decided to use pseudonyms for all participants and the NGO. It is also significant to note that I chose to interview peer educators and facilitators who were over the age of 18 and thus able to provide consent to take part in the research project. Furthermore, as a feminist researcher it was imperative that the research maintained a commitment to larger social transformation and gender equality. Upon completion of this dissertation, I produced a simple version of my findings to share with the participants, SHEA, and its donor partners. While I intend this research to enable feminist transformative change, most importantly the research must ensure the rights of individual participants.

Positionality and Reflexivity

Feminist scholarship challenges the notion that there is "an independent reality to be known separate from the subjective knower" since every aspect of our position, social location and standpoint is incorporated into all aspects of the research endeavour (Taylor, 1998: 368). Researcher subjectivity is deeply implicated in the research process and at all times the researcher must be aware of her subjectivity (Brayton, 1997). With this understanding, it was crucial that I brought awareness to my own positioning within this research and how every observation, interpretation and outcome was coloured by my positionality.

I come to this research with the understanding that in terms of race, class and nationality, I have a vastly different background than the participants of my study. I am a privileged white young woman from the US who grew up with no economic challenges, continued access to schooling and health care, and a stable and supportive family and home. I also realise that as an American feminist researching African sexualities I inhabit a particular space that is wrought with a history of generalisations and presumptions as a legacy of HIV and AIDS research funded by the US government.¹⁷ Given these constraints, I had the responsibility to illustrate to the participants that I was committed to giving a voice to their lived experiences rather than laying additional judgement and stereotypes on their sexual lives.

It is well known among most scholars that a researcher of the same racial and socio-economic background contributes to participants' feelings that the researcher shares with them common experiences (Madriz, 2000: 845). Therefore, it was clear to me that I could not ignore my status as an 'outsider'¹⁸. I was prepared that I may have received answers that reflected my position as an 'outsider', however, despite our differences, I strove to emphasise our similarities. In relation to the SHEA staff participants, I shared with them an understanding of what it means to work in the NGO space. Similarly, in terms of the PFs and PEs, as a young sexual being I could relate to their stories related to sexual behaviour and relationships as well as hopes for the future.

Further, my presence within feminist activist organisations deeply impacted this dissertation. I first entered this feminist space when I began working at the Global Fund for Women on the Sub-Saharan Africa Team. I found a new home to express myself and learn about the role of patriarchy and gender inequality in my own life, community, and world. I was also intimately placed within the donor-partner hierarchy that was uncomfortable at times and which led me to uncover the nuances within these relationships. These questions and curiosities led me to Kampala, Uganda where I

¹⁷ As much as I hoped to study African sexualities without touching on HIV and AIDS, it was nearly impossible to avoid this topic since a large proportion of the funding in this field, especially in South Africa, is centred on HIV prevention.

¹⁸ Other feminist scholars argue that being an 'outsider' can be advantageous. For instance, Brayton (1997) argues that "having to explain personal experiences and feelings with an outsider allow women the space to critically assess their own lived realities" (p. 5).

worked with a local women's organisation and then established Girl Up Initiative Uganda with my Ugandan feminist colleagues.

Given my embeddedness in civil society organisations, I wanted this research to be grounded in a local organisation so that my findings would have a practical use. Therefore, I reached out to SHEA and discussed how we may work together in a mutually beneficial way. I was aware that my engagement within activist organisations and especially pertaining to women's rights broadly placed me within a particular space. During our first meeting, Lorna asked if I would also be a volunteer with the organisation to assist with social media and fundraising. While my first instincts told me to say 'yes', I had to consider what this would mean for the research since becoming involved with the organisation would create its own complexities. Thus, I decided that I would assist SHEA, but in a limited capacity to ensure that I maintained a clear boundary between researcher and participant.¹⁹

This dissertation also forced me to understand why I wanted to conduct this research. This research is not separated from my life as a questioning and curious sexual being and my experiences with sex(uality) education. My sex(uality) education began with my own sexual exploration, informal conversations with friends, and formal education in high school when I was fifteen. My formal education focused mainly on 'safe sex' and abstinence and therefore did not make a strong imprint on my sexual decision-making. Instead, my interest in this area was peaked after a course called 'FemSex' during my undergraduate studies at UC Berkeley. It was the first time I entered a space with other young women where we could honestly speak about our sexual experiences and ask questions. This safe participatory space transformed the way I looked at my sexuality and provided me with the comfort that my questions and hesitations were not abnormal. With my positionality, I am deeply aware of how my own life experiences and stories were interwoven into every aspect of the dissertation. It influenced what I sought to know and the ways in which I made meaning of the data.

¹⁹ I assisted with SHEA's Facebook account, took short videos of PEs wherein they explained how the programme had positively influenced their lives, invited and attended the Women's HIV Summit with Lorna, drafted intern job descriptions, and connected SHEA with organisations that place international volunteers with local organisations.

With this research methodology, I aimed to give voice to the experiences of PFs and PEs and SHEA produced in the donor-partner model. I chose to take a feminist approach to knowledge creation to ensure that the research would advance feminist knowledge around HIV prevention programmes. Most significantly, the research process was grounded in methods and approaches, which took seriously the lived experiences of PFs and PEs as well as the struggles of SHEA staff. In sum, this methodology provided me with the foundation to realise the following two analytical chapters.

Chapter 4: MEANINGS OF DELIVERING SEX(UALITY) PEER EDUCATION

The data analysis is divided into two chapters. The first chapter provides a discursive contextualisation of the sex(uality) peer education programme. This chapter relies on three individual interviews with SHEA staff members: Lorna (CEO), Thando (PM), and Fezile (PC). It attempts to illuminate how SHEA staff gave meaning to the delivery of sex(uality) education within the contested power dynamics between donor and partner. The second chapter investigates the lived experiences of the PFs and PEs through analysing the data from two focus group discussions. In particular, this chapter explores how PFs and PEs represented their roles as both young people and sex educators. Within each chapter, I critically engaged with the ways in which participants integrated 'gender talk' into their representation of the sex(uality) education programme.

In the first theme, I explore the meanings attached to the delivery of a sex(uality) education programme by an NGO entity, in this case SHEA. I investigate how the various stakeholders²⁰ understood the programme in relation to the donor-partner model. Since the programme was reliant on donor funding, SHEA had to meet strict donor requirements on what to focus on, how to do it, and when to start and end the programme. As a result, donor funding greatly limited the autonomy and decision-making ability of SHEA staff. Thus, this analysis serves to untangle this power dynamic between donor and partner and unpack how SHEA found moments to (re)gain agency and fight back.

The chapter is divided into two main themes. Under the first theme 'money matters: the role of donor funding for HIV and AIDS programmes', the research explores the three key limitations that SHEA faced and how SHEA staff (re)gained agency by carving out openings to move beyond the confines of the funding requirements. Firstly, I investigate the limits of a programme centred on HIV prevention in terms of content for lessons. Secondly, I explain the impact of the donor emphasis on monitoring and evaluation for programme implementation. The final sub-theme investigates the effect of donor reliance, especially once the funding has ended. This analysis chapter serves to show how SHEA staff represented the limitations of donor requirements through a narrative of insecurity and tension, which greatly hampered the autonomy of SHEA staff.

²⁰ I acknowledge that this study is limited in its data due to the absence of interviews with staff from the Western Cape Department of Health (WCDOH) or the Global Fund. For this dissertation, there was neither the space nor the time to include these interviews.

The second theme 'disjuncture between vision and reality' attempts to illustrate the inconsistencies between the vision of SHEA's key management staff, which was linked to the overall vision of the donor, as compared to the reality of the programme for the PFs and PEs.²¹ The study revealed that because the dynamic between SHEA and the donor dominated their representation of their work, they became blind to the ways in which the programme began to take a different shape than originally planned. Thus, the data found a major disjuncture in the description of the structure of the programme between key management staff and PFs and PEs.

Money Matters: The Role of Donor Funding for HIV and AIDS Programmes

Looking Narrowly at HIV Prevention

All SHEA management staff emphasised the role of donor funding in their work. Lorna (CEO) first explained to me the details of the funding for the sex(uality) peer education programme. She retold the funding story of how SHEA received funding for the programme from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria via the Western Cape Department of Health (WCDOH) with the aim to prevent new cases of HIV and AIDS among youth in South African urban townships. The WCDOH was the principal recipient of the Global Fund grant and SHEA was the sub-recipient. Thus, when I speak about SHEA's 'donor', I am referring to the WCDOH since SHEA had to report directly to the WCDOH and met their specific requirements and guidelines. In 2004, 16 NGOs (of which, SHEA was one) were awarded an eight-year grant from the WCDOH to implement HIV and AIDS peer education programmes in secondary schools with the materials and curriculum provided.²² Each NGO was presented as an 'implementing partner' tasked with presenting certain lessons with the overall aim to change sexual behaviour and decision-making to decrease the number of new cases of HIV.

²¹ This is not to imply that the vision of the CEO and donor were always aligned. As will be discussed in the first theme, there were many instances where the CEO understood the challenges and limitations of meeting all the donor requirements. However, for the purpose of this analysis section, I will pair the CEO and donor as one.

²² Each organization was given the RUTANANG and Listen Up! teaching manuals.

The study showed that each year the donor required PEs to deliver seven in-school lessons during Life Orientation class²³. All interview participants explained that beyond the lesson deliveries in schools, SHEA found space to supplement these teachings in more informal spaces. The data found that the organisation conducted an annual weekend training camp for all PEs, offered out of class face-to-face discussions led by PEs during lunchtime or afterschool, and provided learners with individual counselling with PFs. The creation and implementation of its own activities allowed SHEA to (re)gain its agency in the face of donor requirements.

Yet, according to SHEA key management staff, WCDOH closely regulated the content of the sex(uality) peer education programme. Since the central aim of the grant was to prevent new cases of HIV and AIDS through behaviour change, SHEA's lesson delivery had to focus on the prevention of HIV and AIDS. Therefore, the majority of the teachings on sex(uality) in the required curriculum focused on prevention, harm-reduction, and the consequences of sexual activity. From experience, SHEA staff explained that they were aware that it was impossible to teach about the risks and prevention of HIV and AIDS without taking into account sexual and reproductive health (SRH) issues as well as the socio-economic realities that shape the lives of the learners. Within the rigid donor constraints of focusing on HIV prevention, SHEA fought back by including its own lessons on SRH. Below, Lorna (CEO) described how SHEA used its creativity to supplement the HIV prevention focus with other SRH topics:

"The only thing that we did, we added to HIV because that was the funding component. So obviously we had to make sure that it's HIV. You cannot go and funders give you for HIV and then you do something else. But, what we did is we've combined HIV and AIDS and teenage pregnancy, HIV and AIDS and STIs, HIV and AIDS and (laugh) you understand what I'm saying?" (Lorna, CEO)²⁴

This quotation underlines the strategies used by SHEA staff to supplement the required HIV lessons with other topics as it saw fit. It also illuminates how these moments of (re)gaining agency were transformed into a source of pride for Lorna and other key staff members. For instance, Lorna (CEO) continued to explain that unlike other

²³ As will be explained in the following section, in reality PFs delivered lessons and PEs played a supportive role.

²⁴ All italicised quotes are direct quotes from individual interviews and focus group discussions.

'implementing partners' SHEA included these additional topics 'from inception' because it understood that HIV and AIDS could not be taught without addressing other issues troubling young people. In this way, Lorna's statement can be seen as an example of how the navigation of narrow donor requirements can be transformed into moments of pride for SHEA staff.

Measuring Moments of Impact

The study revealed that another major limitation of donor funding was the focus given to accurate monitoring and evaluation of individual behaviour change in an attempt to quantify the impact of the grant. For an implementing organisation like SHEA, this meant that the organisation had to establish and meet certain targets that it then explained in its reports. All SHEA management staff mentioned that certain targets had to be met. For instance, Lorna (CEO) explained:

"The targets were very much stipulated in the thing [quarterly report]...this was the face-to-face, this is the number of participants reached, number of this do whatever." (Lorna, CEO)

In addition, Thando (PM) and Fezile (PC) mentioned that they had to measure number of lessons delivered, referrals and peer educators mentored. Consequently, management staff was preoccupied with and worried about meeting donor-set targets and ensuring that all staff members were contributing to this measured success. Thando (PM) had to ensure that all PFs were doing the job correctly and keeping accurate records. He articulates the seriousness of meeting these targets:

"One person who is not doing his job or her job is going to affect all our target. Because we submit a target as SHEA, not as Michael or Sean or you know Andrew, but as SHEA." (Thando, PM)

Throughout his interview, Thando emphasised the importance of creating a culture of record keeping among the PFs. To this end, SHEA even set aside Friday as a day during which all PFs would come to the SHEA Khayelitsha office to report back to Thando.

Since the success of the programme was measured in terms of reaching certain target numbers, the data suggests that Thando (PM) and Lorna (CEO) produced their understanding of the impact of the SHEA programme in relation to these donor targets.

Throughout the interviews, they both often mentioned the importance of ‘reports’ and ‘targets’ as they were the principal staff responsible for reporting back to the WCDOH. Their language was in stark difference to the meanings of sex(uality) peer education delivery given by Fezile²⁵ (PC), PFs, and PEs that instead focused on personal stories of how the programme created individual change. One of the stories that Fezile (PC) retold was one in which a peer educator opened an HIV support group:

“A peer educator was HIV positive. She went to her peer facilitator saying that, ‘I want to disclose my status in the assembly and I want to address the whole school and you know equip them and talk to them about HIV.’ She sat down with her you know to make her understand that this is a huge step....and after that it attracted a lot of learners who were HIV positive.” (Fezile, PC)

This story suggests that the closer staff members were to the PEs and learners, the more stories and examples they had to share. Fezile, PFs and PEs understood that they had to collect numbers to meet donor targets; however they were also in such close contact with the learners that they could listen to their personal stories of change. The data collected on measuring impact also raises questions about the most appropriate way to report on the impact of a programme as it relates to sexual behavioural change. In many instances, individuals give meaning to their lived experiences and decisions through the telling of stories rather than through collecting numbers. Mibono (PF) expressed this well when he said:

“To me personally, it wasn’t about how many kids or how many peer educators I have, it was about how many souls I have touched in a single day.” (Mibono, PF)

The notion of ‘how many souls have I touched’ was reiterated in the interview with Fezile (PC) thereby exemplifying how they made sense of the programme as ‘touching souls’ rather than ‘collecting numbers’. Thus, they created their own meanings of what it meant to deliver a sex(uality) education programme that was separate from the donors and senior management staff.

When the Money Runs Out

²⁵ It is important to note that Fezile (PC) occupied a position that was situated between Lorna (CEO) and Thando (PM) on one side and the PFs on the other side. As a previous PF, Fezile understood the role and limitations of being a PF while also being aware of the report mechanisms required to maintain strong donor relations.

From the beginning of this study, it was evident that the unsustainable nature of the funding was the most detrimental factor of donor reliance.²⁶ One of the first things that Lorna (CEO) explained to me about the sex(uality) peer education programme was that it would be a sombre time to conduct this research since the WCDOH did not continue to fund the programme as expected once the Global Fund ended its grant in March 2013. Lorna and Thando explained that this was due to political wrangling between the WCDOH and the Western Cape Department of Education (WCED), which demanded ownership over a programme operating in their schools, especially one addressing sex(uality) and HIV and AIDS.

In our interview, Lorna spelled out how SHEA had to stop the programme in the schools and could no longer provide salaries to programme staff, including all interview participants (except for two PFs who were later hired as health workers in SHEA's mobile clinic and one PF who worked in the Khayelitsha office). While Thando (PM) and Fezile (PC) continued to work as volunteers in the Khayelitsha office, they were losing hope that they would garner the necessary funding to re-launch the programme. Fezile even explained that he was in the process of looking for work elsewhere to survive economically. On the other hand, all the PFs and PEs were optimistic that the funding from the WCED would come through. This optimistic outlook could also be attributed to their attitudes and beliefs as change agents²⁷. As Nyaniso (PF) said:

"[We have to be] optimistic you know. Ah we're teaching people to be positive so..."
(Nyaniso, PF)

Their positive attitude could also be a result of the fact that three out of the four PF participants, including Nyaniso (PF), still worked with SHEA. Therefore, their situation was less dire than that of Thando (PM) and Fezile (PC) whose jobs were directly impacted by the funding situation. But most importantly, the learners and PEs lost a valuable programme in their schools. Both Sisipho (PF) and Fezile (PC) narrated how the learners continued to ask them when the programme would return in their schools:

²⁶ This is not to say that NGOs do not have the option of establishing their own streams of income through activities such as condom sales, clinic fees, etc. It is mentioned in order to illustrate the deep reliance on funders when the grant amount is so large that it is almost impossible to make the programme self-sustainable in the long-term.

²⁷ This theme of being 'change agent' will be explored in the following analysis section.

“And they’re always always worried that, ‘When are you coming back? We need you, we need you to do this and that.’ But we don’t give them answers because we don’t know when and sometimes we just say, ‘No guys, find a teacher that you trust.’” (Sisipho, PF)

In this quotation, Sisipho (PF) represents the nuances of an external short-term programme in schools. Her recommendation to ‘find a teacher that you trust’ is also key in that it illustrates her awareness of the limitations of an external programme and hints at the importance the programme needs to place on training teachers to be sex(uality) educators.

Additionally, it was difficult for Fezile and the PFs to provide definitive answers of when the programme would come back because of the hierarchy of information within SHEA and the confusion it created. Given that the WCED recently took ownership of the programme, the process of applying for funding was convoluted and confusing, which caused more reason for anger and disillusionment from SHEA staff. As Thando (PM) told me in a fast-paced angry tone:

“People are losing their jobs. And I mean, we are an NGO, our job is advocacy, you know. If we do not stand up then people will walk all over us.” (Thando, PM)

His quotation illustrates the deprivation that characterises the donor -partner model. At once SHEA needs the funding to survive, yet in moments of powerlessness staff members must (re)exert their power and ‘stand up’. Both Thando and Lorna spoke of their strategies to (re)gain their power in the face of an unresponsive government entity. In his interview, Thando retold how he had phoned a woman who worked for the WCED to ‘confront’ her and ask her for an explanation in regards to the continuation of funding. The woman was upset and called Lorna to tell her that someone from SHEA was very rude. His attempt to gain clarity through a phone conversation clearly was not effective. Additionally, Lorna spoke of her own plans of resistance. She explained that she wanted to write a letter of discontent to the newspaper that would be signed and endorsed by the other 15 NGO implementing partners. I never heard more about this action; however, Lorna often called the WCED to receive updates on the proposal process and kept me updated. In January 2014, I received email communication from Lorna in which she explained that SHEA received funding from the WCED for the programme to resume in five schools in Kraaifontein. Even though SHEA did not receive

all the desired funding, at least, she said, they would be able to continue their activities in some of the schools.

The interviews with SHEA key management staff illuminated the ways in which NGO key staff members represented and created meaning of their work, particularly within donor limitations. SHEA staff found the space within a hierarchy of donor power to include their own understanding of the sex(uality) education programme and when their agency and authority was challenged they demonstrated a 'fight-back' mentality, which was both useful and limiting depending on the tactic. The study found that the donor-partner model was represented as (re)creating the 'deficient-state' model, causing unemployment and deprivation, and effectively 'undoing' SHEA's eight years of work. It is also significant to note that NGO staff worked within a set of contradictions: between a sense of the programme's failure and entrapped nature, and its success, popularity, and importance for young people. SHEA staff understood their agency, or lack thereof, within this contradiction.

Disjuncture between Vision and Reality

The data revealed that within SHEA there was an alarming disjuncture between what the senior management staff envisioned for the programme and the 'reality' as told by the PFs and PEs. The major inconsistency that the data showed was around the structure of the programme, namely who was responsible for lesson delivery. All three management staff explained that the PEs taught in the classes. Lorna (CEO) recounted how the programme was changed in the last two or three years from an unstructured and informal programme to in-school lesson delivery:

"Lesson delivery would actually be done by the peer educators in structured school classes, school time...so that the peer educators could actually now have class times." (Lorna, CEO)

Her quotation shows the emphasis given to how peer educators are delivering the lessons. Fezile (PC) supported this claim when he described the job of peer educators:

"The peer educators are meant to educate and the facilitators are there to supervise...Peer educators are the ones who does who are supposed to do the

majority of the job you know like to train their peers, I mean to deliver the lessons, to interact with their peers.” (Fezile, PC)

It is critical that Fezile uses the word ‘meant’ and ‘supposed to’, which could be seen as an illustration of the gap between his knowledge of the donor requirements and the reality in the schools. As mentioned earlier, he was a PF before he was promoted to PC and met regularly with the PFs, therefore, it is likely that he was aware of this inconsistency.

This disjuncture revealed itself most clearly in the data from the focus groups with the PFs and PEs. All three peer educators²⁸ rejected the notion that PEs served as teachers. In its place, PEs played a supporting role for PFs as they delivered the lessons. This became evident during the following discussion with PEs:

Interviewer: “For the classes in school, were you teaching or were you the student?

L: I was a student.

V: Student.

Interviewer: Oh, so what you were teaching was outside of class?

A: We weren’t teaching really.

Interviewer: So were you ever a teacher or were you more just there for support?

V: Yeah, for the support.

L: For support.”

This discussion illustrates that the primary role of PEs was a supportive rather than an educating role. Despite staff and donor emphasis on peers teaching peers in classroom settings, the research revealed that this was never the case. Instead, the PF was the one who was organising and delivering the lessons, not the PEs. The PEs only hosted the out of class informal lessons:

“The facilitator would sit right there and we would host the whole thing and teach others everything that they do not know about the programme and everything that sometimes come to them as a problem.” (Akhona, PE)

The other PEs confirmed that they were more active educators in the informal spaces afterschool, during lunch, or during break times. It was in these informal spaces, not during Life Orientation classes, that the PEs showcased their knowledge and assisted their peers with their problems.

²⁸ At the time of this discussion, only three of four PEs was present.

Furthermore, the study found a level of inconsistency surrounding questions of what materials and curriculum were used during lesson delivery despite donor insistence on the use of certain materials. Mibono (PF) explained that the curriculum was chosen depending on the grade: Grade 8 and 9 followed the Listen Up! manual while Grade 10 and 11 followed the RUTANANG curriculum.²⁹ At the same time, there was also a grade level specific Life Orientation textbook that PFs could pull information from. Despite the insistence of the WCDOH on consistency of lesson delivery through the provision of the RUTANANG and Listen Up! manuals to each implementing NGO partner, each PF chose to use the curriculum in her/his own way. Mibono (PF) reflects on the way he made sense of the different materials during his lesson delivery:

"In cases like learning to pick up cancer, you'd look at the textbook. You see that it has restricted information. When you look at your manual you'd see it would unpack um cancer so you use your manual but aligning it with the school's curriculum." (Mibono, PF)

With an overwhelming amount of material, PFs were able to pick and choose from each curriculum as they saw fit. Thus, it became apparent that it was nearly impossible to ensure consistency in lesson delivery given that each learner had unique questions and problems that could be addressed using different materials.

The disjuncture between the vision of key management staff and the reality as told by the PFs and PEs could be attributed to the power dynamics that exist within an NGO space that operates within a clear hierarchy from the CEO down to the PE. This power dynamic became clear when I began the research by interviewing the CEO and then gradually moved down the power ladder to the PEs. Additionally, the large scale and reach of the programme could have been a cause for this inconsistency. SHEA staff oversaw this programme in 22 schools in both Khayelitsha and Kraaifontein³⁰, which

²⁹ Lorna explained that the production of the materials was part of the requirements set for the WCDOH by the Global Fund. The Listen Up! manual was designed by the Centre for the Support of Peer Education (CSPE) with support from the Global Fund in collaboration with the Departments of Health and Education in the Western Cape. It serves as a guide for peer educators to teach about HIV and AIDS and sex(uality) and includes seven lesson plans. The RUTANANG curriculum was developed through a grant to the Harvard School of Public Health from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and USAID. It consists of four large manual books: 1) a guide and explanation of the peer education model; 2) an implementation guide for NGOs; 3) an implementation guide for schools; and 4) a teaching guide with ten lesson plans.

³⁰ For the purposes of this research, all PFs and PEs included in the focus group discussions were part of the Khayelitsha programme and reported to Thando and Fezile in the Khayelitsha office.

translated to 22 PFs and around 795-1180 PEs³¹. Finally, since SHEA management represented their work largely in terms of the donor-partner relationship, the relationship between themselves and the young people they work with was of lesser importance. During an informal discussion with Mibono (PF), he told me that because the CEO was located in Parow, she would only visit the Khayelitsha office once a month mostly for monitoring reasons. Thus, SHEA staffs' representation of the donor-partner dynamic as tense and insecure had a snowball effect on the way the CEO interacted with the programme staff, PFs, PEs, and learners. All these factors opened the space for misunderstandings to flourish.

This analysis chapter aimed to highlight how SHEA key management staff created meaning to understand the delivery of a sex(uality) peer education programme. As an 'implementing partner' for the WCDOH, the data showed that SHEA staff was under serious limitations in terms of the structure and content of the programme. However, within these confines, SHEA staff strove to find openings for independence and autonomy where they could add value to the programme. Secondly, internal and external hierarchy and the large scale of the programme greatly diminished the possibility of effective communication between senior SHEA staff and PFs, PEs, and learners. This study uncovered a serious disjuncture in SHEA's overall understanding of the functioning of the programme that would have to be reconciled to maximise the likelihood of programme success.

This analysis section investigated how NGO staff and beneficiaries created their own representation of delivering sex(uality) education. It found that the representation of their work was directly connected to, and in tension with, the meaning of the work itself. In other words, 'how' they conducted the peer education programme was just as important, if not more, than 'what' the programme aimed to do. The data suggests that the dynamic between SHEA and its donor dominated their representation of the issues at hand, rather than the discourse on the relationship between themselves and the young people they work with. SHEA key staff represented the tension and confusion around donor-led measurements and money matters through finding the space to

³¹ I received different figures on the number of PEs that were part of the programme. When the programme ended in March 2013, Thando (PM) explained there were 795 PEs and Fezile (PC) said there were 1,180 PEs.

(re)gain their agency. Thus, it was clear that maintaining strong donor relations played a significant part of how SHEA understood and conducted its work. Given that the meaning of delivering sex(uality) education was told within the narrative of insecurity and constant negotiation, this understanding of sex(uality) education was in direct opposition to the sex(uality) health messaging that the programme aimed to foster, which was centred on individual agency and choice. This tension was also met by the inconsistencies between the objectives of the programme and the actual 'roll-out,' which was embedded in the multiple complexities and gendered spaces of secondary school functioning. It was within this confused representation that SHEA staff defended the success of the sex(uality) education programme and navigated the rough terrain of funding requirements.

Chapter 5: MEANINGS OF TEACHING SEX(UALITY) TO YOUNG PEOPLE

This analysis theme describes how peer facilitators and peer educators constructed their identities as both individuals and as educators. It dissects the ways in which PFs and PEs produced meanings of their roles within the sex(uality) peer education programme, particularly in relation to how they represented and did (not) challenge gender assumptions. I first dissect the representations of being a peer facilitator and then turn to the experiences of being a peer educator.

Experiences of Peer Facilitators

In the following theme, I describe how PFs constructed and negotiated their complex identities to produce meanings for sex(uality) education. It is broken down into two main themes to look at how they represented their roles of being a change agent³² and parent; and their experiences of teaching sex(uality) education. This analysis section serves to tease out the nuances and complexities of being a PF while also engaging with PF's (un)conscious representations of gender.

³² I define change agent as someone who acts as a catalyst for change through the inspiration and motivation of others.

Being a Change Agent and Parent

The focus group discussions with PFs revealed that PFs understood their role in relation to being a change agent and parent. I will investigate this through the following two sub-themes: inspiring change through positive thinking and non-judgement, and parental authority and self-regulation. The first sub-theme investigates how PFs taught learners how to bring positive change into their lives through certain ways of thinking and acting. The second theme looks at the ways in which PFs began to take on the role of parent with the resulting effect that they had to regulate their everyday behaviour and self-regulate their behaviour. Within this sub-theme, I examine how gender constructions and norms were (re)produced in the ways PFs understood their identities and interacted with PEs and learners.

Inspiring change through positive thinking and non-judgement

While there were instances in which PFs assisted PEs and learners with issues around HIV and AIDS and sex(uality), the notion of personal change outside the realm of sex(uality) questions is a common representation of sex(uality) education found throughout the narratives of the PFs. PFs regularly referred to the ways in which they taught learners about attitudinal change, for instance how to be generous and optimistic. Beyond teaching about sex(uality), PFs motivated learners to take the initiative to improve the conditions of their lives. Sisipho (PF) explained:

“We want to change their lives.” (Sisipho, PF)

They hoped to inspire change not purely through the transfer of knowledge, but also through the transfer of lessons in positive thinking and generosity. Nyaniso (PF) explained that the learners called him ‘Mr. Change’ because of his strong belief in an individual’s ability to change her/his life opportunities through one’s choices and decisions based on the power of generosity. For instance, Nyaniso (PF) discussed how the act of giving back to the community became a lesson for the learners:

"If we've done something for the school, we have done something for the entire community...it begins with you, you know. I want you to be the change that you want to see." (Nyaniso, PF)

In this quotation, Nyaniso (PF) eloquently illustrated how PFs used their own life decisions as change agents to teach PES and learners how to create margins for 'positive change' in their lives. This representation of sex(uality) education as creating 'positive change' is lined with judgment. Yet, the data revealed many instances in which PFs stressed their non-judgement attitudes and behaviour:

L: "At the end of the day, we are not there to judge them, but we are there to give them knowledge, to give them support..."

S: To guide them.

L: To always change their behaviour, to guide them around, not to tell them like 'you must do this as a peer educator'."

In this conversation, the confusion around the meanings of 'judgement' becomes apparent. While emphasising their non-judgemental attitudes, the PFs simultaneously created meanings around a 'good learner' who learns to change her/his behaviour. The notion of change was also distinguished between negative and positive change. In particular, the PFs mentioned the importance of positively changing 'influential negative learners' by recruiting them to join the peer education programme:

"That is what we we are looking for, influential learners, but influential negative learners. Change that perception to influencing them positively." (Nyaniso, PF)

This representation of the sex(uality) education programme as leading to positive behaviour change was echoed by Lihle (PF) as he recounted the story of how one influential learner changed his life after joining the programme:

L: "I tried to put him close as much as I can in my side.

S: Um.

L: And even the principal noticed that ever since I was close to him..."

S: Things have changed.

L: Now he does his work, now he's attending the class...and he even enjoyed being a peer educator. He would go to the camps, presenting good skills...so that boy now, he had to change others and tell others."

These quotations illustrate the contradictory nature of what it means to be a non-judgemental PF. Despite their efforts to achieve this attitude, it was impossible for PFs to guide the learners outside of their own judgement and meanings of 'positive change'. Thus, PFs representations of sex(uality) education were generated within underlying

tensions between their conscious representations and unconscious judgements and preconceptions.

Parental responsibilities and self-regulation

Even though PFs were not much older than the learners, they represented their role as a parent to the PEs and other learners in the absence of involved parents at home in many cases³³. Sisipho (PF) told her experience as a parent for the PEs and learners. When describing how being a PF had changed her, she responded:

“It made me like think out of the box, not think as a teen, not think as a young woman, but to think as a parent for them.” (Sisipho, PF)

Her job often revolved around creating a safe space for learners given the high levels of gangsterism at the school she worked in. She emphasised that:

“They just wanted you to be there because when they’re with you they feel safe.” (Sisipho, PF)

She continued to explain that many learners were scared to walk home alone afterschool, so she ensured that they arrived home safely and received the necessary support and counselling. Beyond providing emotional support and counselling, the data found that PFs often offered financial and material support to struggling learners. For instance, Lihle (PF) and Sisipho (PF) contributed funds from their ‘pockets’ to ensure that learners had lunch to eat and shoes on their feet. By assuming the financial and social obligations of parenthood, the PFs ‘had to sacrifice a lot’ of their financial resources and time. PFs described how their extended role as a parental figure meant that the job of PFs extended beyond the school gates. As Sisipho (PF) explained:

“The first time it was a job. But this thing, it gets inside of you.” (Sisipho, PF)

This role created new hierarchies between PFs as ‘parents’ and PEs and learners as ‘children’, which included certain responsibilities that required self-regulation for PFs. The most obvious way they generated meaning of self-regulation was in the public spaces they had to avoid. Lihle (PF) and Sisipho (PF) recounted how they couldn’t drink

³³ Even when learners had involved parents, PFs explained that the parents would call the PFs asking for them to come and speak to their child when there was a problem.

in public places in Khayelitsha because they risked unexpectedly meeting learners. Instead, they had to organise 'sit-ins' at home for their friends and as a result they became 'boring people'. Thus, being a PF became a marker of their identity within their peer groups.

PFs also explained how their friends began to view them as 'sex specialists' and would ask them questions that had to do with sex(uality), which required them to acquire more knowledge and information. Thus, they shared 'the learning curve' with the learners as they began to teach themselves important lessons in relation to being a change agent and a sex educator:

"I've learned a great deal. It has empowered me to be you know in a position you know of making the right choices, making the right decision, saying the right things." (Nyaniso, PF)

Nyaniso (PF) continued to provide an example of how being a PF enabled him to better understand people more, especially in sexual relationships when he described how he was now able to tell if his partner was not 'in the mood' for sex.³⁴ In this way, Nyaniso represented the change he was promoting.

When asked if they thought their gender mattered in their work and interactions with the learners, all PFs said 'no'. For instance, according to Sisipho (PF), her gender identity as a woman was not as relevant to her work as the socio-economic context of the school. She explained that in her school she dealt mostly with boys because the school was the 'worst school with the gangsterism'³⁵. However, the data revealed that gender constructions played a role in how the PFs represented their work and their engagement with learners overall. There were moments when PFs challenged gender norms, especially among the male PFs. While it was not unusual for women to act as a 'parent' and carer in this context, for a man to be caring and compassionate was a direct challenge to masculine assumptions. Yet, in some cases, when young men took on the parental role with young girls it was fraught with tension. Participants discussed how

³⁴ This is the first time that the idea of sexual consent was mentioned during the study. Similar to the methods in which other topics on sex(uality) were discussed, Nyaniso did not overtly use the term 'consent', rather he illustrated his point by speaking about 'being in the mood'.

³⁵ As will be discussed in the following section on peer educators, gangsterism operated within certain gender expectations and constructions of masculinity in the urban townships of South Africa.

when male PFs got too close with young women PEs, they faced accusations of sexual harassment. Sisipho (PF) explained the gendered aspects of these accusations:

"Whenever that happened, when a facilitator was accused not as women, but as them males, they were always accused of doing bad things to the learners you know, to the peer educators." (Sisipho, PF)

One participant, Mibono (PF), told his personal story of being accused of sexual harassment on three different occasions by the same young woman PE. He explained:

"I apologised more than three times. And um months later she was pregnant. So it was a very traumatising time. I didn't feel like going to work, I didn't feel like anyone believes me." (Mibono, PF)

Following the accusations, an investigation was started that is still on going, which was humiliating and traumatising for Mibono (PF). He was not fired by SHEA, but was restricted from going to other schools and within 100 meters of the young woman's school. His story illustrates how constructions of older men as sexually aggressive are (re)produced within the space of the sex(uality) education programme.

Despite this story and the obvious influence of gendered expectations and constructions within sex(uality) education, the PFs did not acknowledge the integration of gender questions within their work. Rather than actively challenging gender stereotypes, PFs were still living within the gendered confines and norms of the urban South African township. In sum, the study revealed that the PFs lacked the gender knowledge required to link their divergent gendered actions and behaviours with their representations of their roles in the sex(uality) peer education programme.

The above data illustrates the incongruities between the unconscious and conscious representations of what it means to be a PF. Firstly, the PFs mainly represented their role as a change agent who promoted positive thinking and non-judgemental behaviour. While their unconscious representations (re)affirmed their positive thinking attitude, their focus on being 'non-judgemental' was countered by representations of a 'good PE' who stays in school and does her/his school work. Secondly, despite their insistence that gender was not a factor in their identities and representations of sex(uality) education, it became obvious that gender was key to how PFs represented and experienced their role as change agents and parents, particularly amongst male PFs. At

times gendered constructions were reaffirmed (as was found in the sexual harassment cases), yet at other times male PFs challenged gendered stereotypes and illustrated a different way to be a young man in an urban township. As change agents the PFs had the opportunity to transform deeply ingrained gender dynamics, yet without the conscious awareness and knowledge of gender assumptions and constructions this opportunity was lost.

Teaching Sex(uality) Education

This theme serves to investigate how PFs generated meanings of teaching sex(uality) education with(out) a gendered lens. It is broken into two sub-themes. Firstly, I look at the content of the lessons in terms of its biomedical versus socio-economic and gendered content to illustrate the impacts of a narrow focus on HIV prevention. The second sub-theme explores their approach to delivering lesson plans on sensitive sex(uality) topics and whether or not this integrated gender.

Biomedical vs. socio-economic and gendered content

The content of the sex(uality) education lessons was guided by the provided curriculum, which was framed in terms of a biomedical discourse about sexual health risks, particularly in relation to HIV and AIDS. This biomedical model of HIV prevention was implicitly gendered as it operated under the assumption of gender equality in heterosexual relationships, stressed male condom use, protected against HIV, and assumed that 'non-pregnancy' was a good idea. Lessons presented factual information about the HIV virus, how it was transmitted, and how it could be prevented. In spite of this focus on HIV and AIDS, the PFs explained that:

M: "These kids are fed up with HIV.

L, N: Yeah.

M: They are reading about it, (laugh) on TV, so you cannot just go in a class and say...

S: HIV.

M: HIV. They'll look at you.

S: (laugh) talk, talk talk, all alone.

N: That topic is long exhausted. It's exhausted."

This conversation sheds light on the tension between the donor insistence on teaching HIV prevention and the PFs' experience with this topic. Even though the PFs knew that HIV was 'long exhausted' they still had a responsibility to include these teachings within a discourse of risk and harm. PFs were guided by the 'ABC' method as Nyaniso (PF) explained:

*"Our messages are simple: abstinence, be faithful, um be aware of condoms."
(Nyaniso, PF)*

While the 'messages are simple' the 'ABC' method does not address how gender inequalities and power dynamics serve as obstacles to condom use or faithfulness. In the focus group, the PFs did not recognise the limitations of this message in terms of gender. Instead, they represented the limitations in terms of social ills that they had to address:

"Gangsterism was not part of our manual, but because it was a social ill that the school had, we had to address it." (Mibono, PF)

This quotation illustrates how they included external influences and challenges into the content. Similarly, when I asked the PFs to reflect on how they made meaning of a PE who became pregnant Nyaniso (PF) emphasised the significance of the socio-economic context in which sexual decisions are made:

"They are aware of um...prevention methods. They are aware of those. We just probe a few questions about that to see that, 'Yes, I know I was supposed to prevent or to do that, but I didn't do it because of the partner that I had. He's much more mature than me, because of certain conditions, background conditions that maybe she was living alone, you know. They come from challenging backgrounds, from challenging communities.'" (Nyaniso, PF)

Nyaniso (PF) explained that the 'challenging background' and 'challenging communities' prevented PEs from doing what they were 'supposed to do'. His awareness of the socio-economic context of sex(uality) is significant as it illustrates the importance of teaching sex(uality) within context. Yet, it is equally significant that there was no mention of the gender power dynamics that formed another reason why this PE could have become pregnant. Nyaniso (PF) began to touch on the power imbalances in these types of relationships, but he did not include a deeper engagement with the gendered implications of teenage pregnancy, and in particular within relationships between young girls and older men. In addition, in all of the participants' descriptions of the

programme, lessons were crafted around heterosexuality and heterosexual norms ; there was no mention of LGBTQI relationships or identities. There was only one mention of non-coital sexual intercourse as a safe practice when Nyaniso (PF) explained that masturbation could be a part of abstinence and was key to the lives of most PEs.³⁶

In conclusion, the study revealed the nuances and intricacies inherent in PFs representation of sex(uality) education. They illustrated the ways in which they (re)created biomedical views of sex(uality) through the teaching of the 'ABC' method and through a focus on HIV prevention. On the other hand, they understood the shortcomings of the biomedical model and the need to include lessons around the socio-economic context in which learners make sexual decisions. Yet, they lacked the gendered knowledge to link the biomedical model's shortcomings with questions around the role of gender constructions and inequalities in sexual decision-making.

Delivery approach

The study found that the PFs rather than the PEs were the main 'educators' in the classroom. PFs mentioned that they had the responsibility to keep the topics interesting to maintain the attention of the learners, while also being careful not to be seen as promoting sexual activity that would upset school administration, teachers and parents. Sisipho (PF) described the taboos that surrounded 'sex talk' in the classroom:

"We usually talked about sex and sexuality so um at the back of the class there's always that one who says, 'Ja, SEX! SEX!' They just get excited about that you know because no one talks about it, no one at school because it's gonna be seen as if you are forward or you know so much or those teachers are gonna judge them that, 'Oh, that one, mm mm. He's always talking about sex.' Or something or 'he knows a lot about sex.'" (Sisipho, PF)

In this excerpt, Sisipho (PF) shows an explicit articulation of the significance of 'sex talk' since it is rarely (or never) discussed in a classroom setting. The job of a peer facilitator then was to transform sex(uality) into a topic that could be taken both seriously and

³⁶ Nyaniso (PF) did not specify if he was referring to male and/or female masturbation, however, I will assume that he was referring to male masturbation given his previous statements about working with mostly male PEs and learners.

lightly. Therefore, PFs oscillated between different lesson delivery methods, from didactic classroom style teaching to informal afterschool discussions and games:

"We have games, we have clubs, we have like every way to make them interested in this topic. So if you see now they seem tired, you see that they're not listening to you, you change the style." (Lihle, PF)

PFs strategically eased learners into the sex(uality) discussion rather than jumping right into teaching about sex as was the approach of other organisations:

"The topic where you ask about sex. You see because others are in there just for the money. They would just go in classes and talk straight". (Mibono, PF)

This data illuminates the difference between the approaches of other HIV prevention organisations with their 'straight talk'³⁷ versus SHEA's delivery approach that centred on other means of lesson delivery. For instance, given that SHEA was required to teach learners about HIV and AIDS, PFs turned the HIV topic into a game, called 'Kicking AIDS Out Game' that was mentioned by the majority of PFs and PEs. Mibono (PF) explained how the game aimed to enliven the topic with physical movement and fun:

"You make a circle, then they try to defend the ball so it's not getting in between their legs or in their side, it should not go outside them. After they are done, you explain that: "That ball was HIV. That's how it flows. You try to defend it from this person but the person next to you would get it." (Mibono, PF)

This quotation illustrates PFs' representation of how games were effective teaching tools to make HIV a more interesting topic for the learners who are 'fed up with HIV'. It became evident that PFs used the word 'game' to describe other teaching approaches:

"The strongest message comes from the message game... We would tell the kids to write up the flip-charts, the topic, come up with a topic, present it to the bigger group." (Nyaniso, PF)

PFs represented the 'message game' as an effective learner-centred delivery approach that was a fun way to empower learners to take ownership of the content. The emphasis on teaching through games was in direct opposition to the biomedical 'straight talk' approach used by other organisations. Games were also viewed as a teaching strategy to enable learners to feel like children again. Given the challenges of living in an urban township, most young people grow up quickly, thus missing the innocence and

³⁷ By 'straight talk', PFs meant that educators started talking about sex(uality) and HIV and AIDS in the classroom setting before building a relationship with the learners and/or playing games and icebreakers.

playfulness of childhood. The data revealed that it was during games that PEs and learners could forget their daily realities, enjoy themselves, and learn about sex(uality). It also served as an alternative to other escape mechanisms available such as drug abuse and gangsterism.

In conclusion, the study found that being a PF for young women and men was a multifaceted and extremely involved job. While they were motivating learners to create 'positive' change, they consequently inspired change in their own lives. At the same time, there were serious inconsistencies within their representations of what it meant to be a PF; particularly in the way they described their 'non-judgemental' attitudes and influence of gender roles. Further, the sex(uality) curriculum and delivery did not incorporate a gender sensitive pedagogy. There was a lack of discussion around gender-specific topics or the ways in which the lessons integrated 'gender talk.' Rather, the PFs represented their engagement with 'sex talk' in terms of how they creatively adjusted their communication approach to include games and topics that related to the socio-economic content of Khayelitsha. As will be seen in the following section, PEs had both similar and distinct experiences in the sex(uality) peer education programme.

Experiences of Peer Educators

This theme attempts to describe how peer educators generated meanings of their role as peer educators in relation to how they lived as gendered individuals and peers. I divide this analysis section into two main themes that investigate being a change agent and example; and teaching sex(uality) education. It is the hope that this theme aptly unravels how peer educators represented their identities and did (not) use their status as change agents and examples to challenge gender assumptions and constructions.

Being a Change Agent and Example

The first main theme aims to investigate how PEs represented their role as both change agents and examples to their peers. It is divided into two sub-themes: doing it for yourself: change through difference, and 'walking the talk' as an embodied example. This first sub-theme reveals how PEs negotiated their identities as learners and change agents. The same identity negotiation is found in the second sub-theme that revolves

around embodying an example within difficult socio-economic contexts. Within both sub-themes, I explore how PEs represented (or lacked an engagement with) the influence of gender constructions on their role as PEs.

Doing it for yourself: change through difference

This sub-theme draws on the data to show how the sex(uality) peer education programme changed the lives of the learners through the opportunities it opened up, and the lessons they learned. Since the act of becoming a peer educator was on a voluntary basis, the learner had to want to become a change agent prior to joining the programme. As Luniko (PE) noted:

“At the end you are doing it for yourself.” (Luniko, PE)

One joins the peer education programme in order to improve his/her life and learn something new. PEs also explained that with the information and knowledge that they gained they increased confidence and self-esteem. As a result, they began to see expanded life opportunities and hope for the future:

“Peer education helps you to achieve something in life.” (Vuyani, PE)

Peer education then was viewed as a tool to succeed and prosper in life despite the harsh socio-economic realities of the urban township.

PEs also gained status amongst their peers as someone who was ‘mature’ and ‘different from them all’:

L: “Some of them they see you then they see it is easy to come and talk to you about their problems.

V: Yeah, because now they see that you are mature.

L: Yeah, because I’m different from all them....

V: Because you know something.”

Their difference was also magnified by their close relationship with the PFs who would provide counselling and listen to their problems. Luniko (PE) recounts her relationship with her ‘favourite facilitator’:

“I had one and then whenever I had a problem I would go to him and he would always tell me, ‘I know you Luniko. You’re strong. You’re always active.’ So that would motivate me to never mind the problem I have at home, at school or wherever and just always be positive and always smiling.” (Luniko, PE)

Luniko represents her relationship with a male PF as gender-neutral. She never mentioned that their gender difference interfered with their close relationship and it was not discussed as an issue for the other PEs.

Despite the benefits of becoming a PE, not all learners wanted to or could stay in the programme. The data revealed that many learners left the programme due to the extra work required, early pregnancy, and/or pressure to join a gang and take drugs. Three out of the four PEs interviewed completed the programme and one dropped out after falling pregnant.

The PEs unknowingly described these challenges as being deeply gendered: young men felt pressured to join gangs and use drugs, and young women bore the burden of pregnancy and child-rearing. The participants explained that it was common for young women to become pregnant while in secondary school and subsequently drop out of the programme. Yet, young men rarely (if ever) dropped out after causing a girl to become pregnant. Thus, illustrating that the young women were having relationships with older men or that pregnancy was viewed as solely the girls’ responsibility. For young men, the main pressures they faced were in relation to gangsterism and drug abuse. Vuyani (PE) recounted:

“Drugs is a problem. They drop out because they started smoking now, then they drop peer education, you see?” (Vuyani, PE)

This quotation reveals how external constructions of masculinity impacted the retention of young men PEs who had to assert their masculinity by taking part in drugs and gangs. Even though gendered norms played a critical role in their representation of being a change agent, the PEs did not express an awareness of the role of gender norms.

Similarly, the PEs did not address the gendered implications of being a PE, particularly for young men. The data showed that being a peer educator was linked to notions of femininity. Even though SHEA intended to have gender equality amongst the PEs with

two girls and two boys from each class, gender norms dissuaded many young men from joining the programme. The PEs did not address this issue, however in the interview with Fezile (PC) he explained:

*“You will find that in this class there are more women or females who are interested. It’s mostly females who are interested you know in social issues.”
(Fezile, PC)*

In this quotation, Fezile (PC) (re)produced gender constructions of women as more ‘interested in social issues’ than men. It also illustrates how Vuyani (PE), as a male PE, could be seen as resisting constructions of masculinity. The study illustrated that he was determined to stay in the programme even when his friends dropped out. In addition, when we spoke about his plans for the future, he explained that he wanted a job that would allow him ‘to help people’ which would be seen in this context as a women’s job. Thus, Vuyani created his own representation of what it meant to be a young man and peer educator in Khayelitsha. While his representation of a male PE is noteworthy given his potential to transform notions of masculinity, his disengagement with notions of gender is worrying and could be a result of the programme’s lack of focus on teaching about gender stereotypes.

‘Walking the talk’ as an embodied example

The data overwhelmingly showed that peer educators represented their role as being a positive example and role model for other learners. The idea behind the peer education model was that with the lessons they learn and teach, PEs would serve as examples for their peers and ‘walk the talk’. Akhona (PE) was eloquent on how PEs ‘walked the talk’:

“Every day they look; what you do every day, how you behave. You’re not supposed to do this because you are a peer educator. You are supposed to act like this and that.” (Akhona, PE)

In this quotation, Akhona (PE) recognised how she internalised the pressure to be a perfect example. Given their status as examples, the PEs had the opportunity to dismantle gender constructions and challenge gender norms. Instead, the sex(uality) education programme reinforced ‘appropriate’ gender roles. For instance, the PEs explained how girl PEs were not allowed to date:

L: "They mustn't know about it [dating] cause it's not allowed. I remember, I don't know who that sister³⁸ is, like the one whose in charge of, but then she's black nah, she once told us she visited us and then she told us that, 'I saw a peer educator...'

A: At the clinic?

L: 'Nah, not at the clinic. Next to the road, I was driving and she didn't see me. And she was standing with a boy' and then she called out at her and then she said, 'You know what, give me that.' She had a badge. 'Give me that nametag. Give me that nametag. You can no longer be a peer educator. How can you be an example to others and stand with a boy like this?' And then she expelled her.

A: Yooo.

L: Because they are teaching us at school and then we are doing this. That is why we are not allowed to fall pregnant also.

V: We must not forget that we are leaders."

This conversation highlights the constructions of femininity that represent relationships with boys as inappropriate behaviour for young women. For female PEs to 'walk the talk' they had to walk away from boys to protect their innocence. Rather than using their leadership position to challenge gendered expectations, young women PEs represented their roles as ones that were highly regulated and wherein they could not engage in relationships with boys.

Simultaneously, the PEs represented what it meant to be an example in terms of avoiding or changing bad peer groups. Vuyani (PE) described the complexity of being a peer educator in his peer group, at first being told he 'knows too much' and then being seen as going 'the right way':

"I joined the peer education with my friends, but they dropped out. Then I stayed with the peer education. But there I think was the change because I educated them and I told them that these things goes like this...but you see, peers like them they like listen to you because you are a friend. Then you see they will tell you how you know too much...then you keep on and at the end of the day they will see you change as a person. Then they will say, 'No, this is the right way.'" (Vuyani, PE)

This quotation and the data from the other PEs revealed that they had to constantly compromise their identities as PEs with their old identities as part of other peer groups. In many cases they had to end friendships with old friends. However, PEs could greatly influence their friends who were open to learning from them. Thus, it became evident that PEs were most likely to influence their friends rather than other learners.

³⁸ It was not clear if Akhona was referring to a PF or Life Orientation teacher.

At the same time, it is significant that PEs recognised that they were not immune to making mistakes and that this could help in their representation of an example learner.

As Vuyani (PE) explained:

“We all make mistakes. We are not perfect. But you can also learn through your mistakes. You can tell people your mistakes and show them how you learned from them.” (Vuyani, PE)

Other PEs similarly emphasised that they saw their mistakes as a means to teach others how to learn from past decisions. This theme revealed itself when we got in a debate about the correct course of action for a young woman PE who becomes pregnant.

Akhona (PE) started the conversation when she asked why it was that girls who fall pregnant always dropped out of the sex(uality) peer education programme:

L: “Because of shame.

A: See that’s the thing!

L: The facilitators told us ne to prevent pregnancies.

V: To be an example.

L: Yeah, to be an example so now that I’m pregnant I’m no longer an example...

A: Yeah, it’s a shame yes. But, it’s our duty to teach them how to learn from their mistakes. So if this person quits how is she supposed to learn from her mistakes.”

The data revealed that some PEs, such as Akhona (PE) viewed the making of a mistake and thereby losing status as ‘an example’ as a reason to leave the programme while others saw this as an opportunity to teach others to ‘learn from mistakes’. More importantly, however, this conversation points to the way in which PEs (re)produced gender assumptions that represent teenage pregnancy as ‘a mistake’ and a reason for a PE to ‘no longer be an example’.

This conversation led us to the sharing of Luniko’s (PE) story of how she became pregnant while she was a peer educator in Grade 10. She revealed that she left the peer education programme because she was no longer a ‘good example’. It is important to note that during the retelling of her story, Luniko (PE) never drew on how constructions of femininity had a profound impact on her sexual decision-making. For example, she never mentioned the gendered power dynamics of her relationship with the father or how the pregnancy became ‘her mistake’ rather than the man’s³⁹. As a result, she missed

³⁹ Luniko (PE) explained that the father was not supporting her son and instead how her family supported her emotionally and financially.

the link between her life experience and the way in which gender played a critical role in her decision-making process.

The data above illustrates how PEs represented their role in sex(uality) education as being a change agent and an example learner. While they were in some ways 'different' from the other learners, they still lived within communities characterised by high levels of teenage pregnancy and gangsterism. Thus, they revealed that they had to carefully navigate the space between example and learner, and not 'make mistakes'. It also became apparent that the PEs lacked the gender knowledge necessary to integrate the influence of gender norms and power dynamics into their embodied example.

Teachings Sex(uality) Education

This second theme serves to locate the PEs within the teachings of the sex(uality) peer education programme. It is broken into the same two sub-themes that were used in the PF section: biomedical vs. socio-economic and gendered content, and delivery approach. The first sub-theme explores how PEs proximity to the lives of the learners enabled PEs to have intimate knowledge and understanding of the socio-economic context of Khayelitsha. Yet, they lacked the gender knowledge to integrate it into their lesson plans. In terms of the second sub-theme, I investigate the ways in which PEs delivered lessons in a supportive rather than primary teaching role.

Biomedical vs. socio-economic and gendered content

The study confirmed that there were many outside socio-economic influences in Khayelitsha that needed to be addressed in order for the programme to be most effective. Yet, in terms of specific teachings regarding sex(uality), PFs had to follow clear guidelines. Fezile (PC) explained how SHEA negotiated this space:

"We can talk about it [condoms] and you know um encourage those who are sexually active you know to practice safe sex. But mostly for Grade 8 what we are preaching is 'AB' which is 'abstinence and be faithful...In Grade 9 it's 'ABC: abstinence, be faithful, and condomise'. But the reality is that you know, learners are falling pregnant in Grade 8." (Fezile, PC)

This data revealed how the donor-required lesson plans did not necessarily relate to the learners' sex lives. The lessons also had a narrow focus on 'safe sex' and protecting oneself to the detriment of other aspects of sex(uality) such as gender, desire, pleasure, and so on. Luniko (PE) described what she learned in the peer education programme:

"I have knowledge about sex and everything and I like that. Yeah because it gives me it warns me on what to do and how I should protect myself and stuff." (Luniko, PE)

In these teachings, sexual activity becomes something one needs to be careful about and 'protect' oneself from, rather than a part of one's identity to explore and enjoy. It is particularly interesting that this above quote came from Luniko (PE) because after she made this statement she told her story about how she became pregnant. Thus, her life experience illustrates the gap between knowledge and behaviour, particularly in the case of sexual decision-making.

The study also illustrated that all participants were aware that teenage pregnancy was a key issue for young girls in school, yet the curriculum did not focus greatly on preventing pregnancy. Rather, 'safe sex' practices revolved around the prevention of HIV given the HIV funding component of the grant. If SHEA had more space to navigate within the donor constraints, PEs could have included more content on teenage pregnancy and contraception options.⁴⁰

Similarly, there were many other socio-economic issues besides HIV that impacted the lives of learners. As a consequence, the study found that PFs spent the majority of their time providing counselling and support to PEs and learners.⁴¹ Luniko (PE) reflected on the group counselling sessions led by the PFs:

"It would be like counselling. So maybe one of our facilitators would say, 'Tell us something that's bad that happened to you. And what happens here stays here.' So

⁴⁰ All participants mentioned contraception in relation to condoms (both female and male) without recognising other forms of contraception. This may be a cause of limited knowledge or alternatively, a cause of limited access to other types of contraceptive in community clinics.

⁴¹ Mibono (PF) explained that they took on the role of counsellor and social worker because: *"In these schools here in Khayelitsha you won't find a school social worker always available. If there's a child who is having problems they have to phone the Department of Education, make an appointment with the social worker, which is a very long process. But with us inside the schools, the principal knew exactly who to talk to."*

then we would open up and some would tell terrible stories, like bad stories that happened to them.” (Luniko, PE)

It was in these spaces that learners could ‘open up’ and reveal the problems that they were facing. The data showed that HIV was not the predominate issue. None of the four PEs mentioned HIV throughout the discussion other than as a lesson they were taught. Instead, there was much discussion around gangsterism, drug abuse, poverty and teenage pregnancy as the major problems the learners faced. Similarly, none of the PEs discussed gender as a topic that they delved into or as a lens to understand their sex(uality).

Delivery approach

The delivery approach of PEs was more informal than the formal lesson deliveries given by the PFs. PEs used time outside of class to teach their peers lessons on different topics. The data illustrated that in-class the PEs were the main participants and helpers to the PFs. When other learners would walk out of class because they didn’t like a particular topic, the PEs would stay and participate. Luniko (PE) described how she enjoyed participating:

“It was fun, especially when they come to class so I know that, ‘Ok, Thandi or Sam would ask this ne and I would already know this ‘cause Sam already told me that...so it was fun even though people didn’t want it.” (Luniko, PE)

The study illustrated that the act of staying in class while others left was a statement that the PEs believed in the transformational abilities of the programme. Beyond assisting in the classroom setting, the data illustrated how PEs transferred their knowledge to their friends in informal spaces:

“When they are in trouble they come to you because they know you know those things.” (Vuyani, PE)

In this statement, Vuyani (PE) showed how his friends felt comfortable asking him sensitive questions because ‘they know you know those things’. In this way, the study revealed that PEs resembled leaders more than educators. Akhona (PE) mentioned that leadership defined her role as peer educator:

“To me it’s being a leader to others. An example so that they can learn so much from me and maybe the way to behave.” (Akhona, PE)

In her quotation, we see that a leader means having a sense of obligation to be an example through the self-regulation of one’s actions and behaviours.

The data from the PEs shed light on how PEs made meaning of their role as peer educator. Since the programme operated on a volunteer basis, the PEs were learners who already wanted to transform their lives. PEs became examples of change for their peers and had the positive attitude to design their dreams for the future. In terms of teaching sex(uality) education, the data illustrated that the PFs did not inhibit the role of primary educators, instead they became supportive leaders. Simultaneously, PEs knew the socio-economic context intimately, which enabled them to properly understand and respond to their peers’ problems. However, all of this took place within a limited understanding and application of gender constructions, which greatly hampered their ability for PEs to question larger gender inequalities and power dynamics in their lives.

Chapter 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I sought to explore how PFs and PEs represented their identities as both sex(uality) educators and young South Africans through their involvement in a peer education programme. It became evident that it would also be necessary to unpack the limits and possibilities in schools-based donor-funded interventions. For this discussion section, I begin by outlining the impact of transforming an NGO into a service deliverer of sex(uality) peer education programmes, which I call the ‘conflicted and hierarchical nature of service delivery’. Subsequently, I examine how PFs and PEs represented their roles as change agents rather than sex educators. Then, I explore how the messages of a rational sexuality, specifically in relation to HIV prevention, influenced the identities and teachings of PFs and PEs. I conclude by reflecting on how this research contributes to knowledge on sex(uality) peer education programmes and its possibilities to lead us towards a feminist, learner-centred sex(uality) education in South Africa.

Conflicted and Hierarchical Nature of Service Delivery

I suggest that the themes described in Chapter 4 were evidence of the 'conflicted and hierarchical nature of service delivery' in South Africa, especially in regards to sex(uality) peer education programmes. The 'conflicted and hierarchical nature of service delivery' means that there were certain conflicts arising out of competing knowledges and power relations between international donors, government departments, NGO management staff, and programme beneficiaries around what it means to implement a 'successful' sex(uality) education programme. The hierarchy that existed between donor and implementing 'partner' created a sense of powerlessness among SHEA staff and consequently they sought means to (re)gain agency and fight back against the rigid donor requirements. It is within this complex context that SHEA represented the tensions arising from competing understandings of a 'successful' sex(uality) education programme. Therefore, the meaning of sex(uality) education itself was told within a narrative of insecurity and negotiation rather than one of trust and collaboration.

This representation of the tension and control of 'money matters' that defined the donor-partner relationship was linked to the meaning of the work itself. SHEA staff was preoccupied with pleasing the donor and, therefore, represented their work in terms of the 'targets met' and 'number of learners reached'. This focus on donor requirements led to a disjuncture between the vision of the programme and the reality of how it was rolled out. In addition, I argue that the donor and partner never took seriously questions about the sustainability of the programme when the funding ended. Instead, it would have been beneficial for SHEA, together with the Global Fund, to investigate more long-term strategies for the sex(uality) education programme once the funding ended. One viable strategy would involve training Life Orientation teachers as Simbongile (PF) and Fezile (PC) suggested:

*"It would have been much easier if the teachers were also trained on the manual."
(Fezile, PC)*

This idea is in line with Pattman's (2006) suggestion that teachers should receive extensive training that also engages with the ways they integrate gender into the lessons and identify and present themselves as men and women.

Most importantly, this 'conflicted and hierarchical nature of service delivery' had serious implications for the implementation of the programme. This study revealed that despite the donor focus on a biomedical approach to HIV prevention, learners were 'fed up with HIV'. Rather than feeling that they exercised real ownership of the problem of HIV, PFs and PEs taught HIV because it was part of the lesson delivery plan. In response, SHEA staff, PFs, and PEs generated meaning of the programme through the inclusion of topics relating to the socio-economic realities of learners' lives, which is essential to include in any peer education programme. This confirms the findings of other scholars who argue that sex(uality) peer education's focus on HIV and AIDS does not sufficiently engage with the broader context in which young people learn about HIV and AIDS (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002; Lesko, 2007; Visser, 2007).

Being a Sex Educator or Change Agent?

This research highlights the need to move beyond the discourse of peer educator as sex educator to explore the ways in which PEs and PFs began to exemplify change agents. In other words, the sex(uality) peer education programme began to resemble a leadership programme for peer educators rather than a sex(uality) education programme. All participants expressed how the programme taught learners personal improvement lessons in generosity, progress, confidence, hope and optimism. In this way, the sex(uality) peer education programme offered PEs the opportunity to be 'different' through moving beyond the narrow confines of a world of crime, unemployment, and early pregnancy. Particularly for young men, this identity as change agent was directly opposed to dominant contemporary images of black South African youth as gangsters and sexually assertive (Posel, 2005). Instead, they were participating in the discourse of 'youth optimism' where problems were seen as waiting for the revitalizing touch of the younger generation (Lesko, 2007).

Nevertheless, even within these 'positive' teachings, contradictions between the unconscious and conscious representation of being a PE was evident. For instance, PFs

emphasised that they promoted non-judgemental behaviour, yet they made distinctions between a 'good' and 'bad' learner. Similarly, PEs represented their role as being 'good examples' to their peers, which meant that they had to regulate their behaviour so as not to 'make mistakes', which was highly gendered. As a leader, girl PEs were not supposed to be found with boys and/or pregnant, and boy PEs were not supposed to engage in gansterism or drugs.

Thus, the research found that PEs and PFs did not use their position as 'change agents' to challenge gender constructions and transform the way young people engage with questions of sex(uality) and gender. Ideally peer education should provide young people, especially PEs, with opportunities to develop a critical consciousness of the way constructed norms of gender place their sexual health at risk (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002: 341). However, the study found that PFs and PEs (re)produced notions of femininity and masculinity in the ways they regulated their behaviour and spoke about 'good' behaviour in gender terms. It is essential that PFs and PEs are deeply engaged with 'gender talk' and include questions of gender power dynamics (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002; Fine and McClelland, 2006; Garcia, 2009; Jewkes, 2013).

Teaching a Rational Sexuality

My findings are in line with my starting assumption that the sex(uality) education teachings assumed fully rational behaviour on the part of individuals (Templeton, 2003b; Baxen and Breidlid, 2004; Posel, 2005). As an HIV prevention programme, PFs and PEs centred their lessons on a 'safe sex' discourse that presumed a level of rational decision-making by a modern young person (Baxen and Breidlid, 2004; Posel, 2005). In this way, sexual self-regulation merged moral reflexivity with notions around rational, responsible behaviour (Lesko, 2007). I argue that this discourse was grounded in the notions of a singular 'African sexuality' that was seen as uncivilised and needing to be controlled through the transfer of knowledge (McClintock, 1995; Tamale, 2011). Therefore, sexual self-regulation became a central part of the rational regulation of sexual desire among young people in the programme.

Even though the language of rational sexuality was downplayed, the PFs and PEs recognised that they functioned as parents and role models respectively, and some participants did utilise the language of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ decisions. The personal and sexual lives of PFs and PEs became part and parcel of their roles as parents and role models; they had to self-regulate their sexual behaviour based on a sexual morality that required one to behave in rational and disciplined ways. Luniko’s (PE) pregnancy illustrated the limits of teaching a rational sexuality that ignored gendered constructions of sexuality. She blamed herself for the ‘mistake’ rather than seeing her sexual decision-making as part of the broader socio-economic and gendered context of Khayelitsha. This lack of gendered knowledge was found in both the ways in which PFs and PEs represented themselves as change agents and in the way they represented the lessons they taught. Thus, the focus on teaching a rational sexuality without an engagement with constructions of gender lost the chance to engage with the various dimensions of sexuality that touch every part of a learner’s life (Tamale, 2011: 12).

In sum, this research points towards the urgent need to move beyond the narrow ‘ABC’ method that is premised on rational sexual decision-making and a focus on HIV prevention. If sex(uality) peer education programmes are to achieve more than a superficial level of knowledge production, they must interact with the intersections of the lives of young people, as well as incorporate the gender aspects of a young person’s sex(uality). For that reason, the inclusion of a feminist, learner-centred sex(uality) peer education must be seriously considered.

Towards a Feminist, Learner-centred Sex(uality) Peer Education

Much work remains to be done to develop a feminist sex(uality) peer education programme that places gender at its centre and operates within a framework of participatory education. It would include a critical engagement with the ways in which gender dynamics and experiences shape one’s life and decisions, and which would enable learners to challenge heteronormative and male-dominated notions of sex(uality) in their own words. As Garcia (2009) explains, “young people have been a target audience for safe sex education campaigns, and it is necessary to consider how youth translate those messages and infuse them with their own meanings” (p. 525).

Rather than assume gender meanings, it is necessary to allow young people to participate in the creation of their own understandings of sex(uality).

The findings from the SHEA programme point to the lack of emphasis on gender inequality and assumptions, and its impact on sexual health and decision-making among young people. Instead, PFs and PEs must recognise that they are constantly performing gender (Pattman, 2006) and hold the responsibility to challenge gender norms and explore their own multiple and changing gender identities. The data revealed a few moments of gender discordance, such as the way in which Vuyani (PE) challenged constructions of masculinity. Yet, all participants lacked the awareness of the way in which gender shaped every part of a learner's life and decision-making abilities. The programme did not encourage PFs and PEs to disrupt gender inequalities; instead their lesson delivery and experiences reinforced harmful gender constructions. They were expected to act within gender norms, such as when the female PE was reprimanded for being seen with a boy. Though gender awareness is the key ingredient to developing critical consciousness that is most likely to encourage behaviour change (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002), it was absent from SHEA's programme.

A feminist sex(uality) peer education programme must also integrate learner-centred forms of delivery, which emphasises learner participation in the planning and implementation of lesson plans. This would include young people's constructions of their lives and identities as the main resources for sex(uality) education with young people being encouraged not only to discuss their lives and identities, but also to reflect on the ways they construct their identities (Pattman, 2006). A learner-centred participatory teaching approach was the intention of peer education, yet it became evident that the majority of the lesson plan delivery took a didactic approach. However, there was positive evidence that the participatory teaching sessions (games and informal after-school discussions) had the most impact on PEs and learners. The 'message game' stands out as being both learner-centred and engaging as well as represents an approach to sex(uality) teaching that combines the needs of the learners with the content requirements of the donor. Thus, a learner-centred participatory approach positions young people as experts and empowers them to take ownership of the programme and their own life decisions (Pattman, 2006). If learners assume a sense

of psychological ownership of a problem they are far more likely to take measures to begin to address it (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002). Hence, sex(uality) peer education programmes must take as a starting point the lived experiences and knowledge of learners to enable them to own and address the problem of HIV and AIDS as well as the other issues they face.

Conclusion

This study uncovered the conflicting and hierarchical nature of delivery of a sex(uality) peer education programme in South Africa. I argue that the donor's approach to funding (re)created power dynamics between donor-partner and generated a narrative around the delivery of sex(uality) education that was premised on insecurity and tension. This dynamic had serious effects on the implementation of the programme and the sense of ownership by SHEA staff, PFs, PEs, and learners. However, the study revealed that within these restraints, participants fought back and (re)gained their agency through finding margins to include their own experiences and content. Most importantly, PFs and PEs incorporated issues around the socio-economic situation in which the learners experienced sex(uality). The inclusion of the intersectional nature of young peoples' lives within the programme allowed young people to construct their sexual identities and make sense of the HIV and AIDS messages in relation to their lived experiences rather than through a narrow focus on the biomedical aspects of the disease (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002; Baxen and Breidlid, 2004; Lesko, 2007; Visser, 2007).

The second theme of this study explored the PFs and PEs representations of the sex(uality) education programme. The data illustrated how the PFs and PEs illustrated that their roles were more likened to a change agent than sex(uality) educator. This role required PFs and PEs to self-regulate their behaviour in and out of school in order to ensure that they 'walked the talk.' Though all participants reported that gender did not affect their role, it was clear that gender coloured their representations and experiences in the sex(uality) education programme. The study found gender assumptions and constructions in many of the stories told, such as the sexual harassment case, the PE's early pregnancy, and the notion of a 'good learner'.

Additionally, the research found that the lesson content (re)produced gender binaries and constructions. The lessons lacked a deep engagement with gender dynamics as a central aspect of sexual health and decision-making. Instead, the lessons were rooted in a rational sexuality discourse within which young people must self-regulate their desires and practice 'good' behaviour. This approach failed to excite and engage with learners and PEs and as a result could be the main cause for findings showing programme ineffectiveness (Mason-Jones, et al., 2011). On the other hand, it is noteworthy that all participants mentioned the engaging delivery approach of SHEA, including the 'Kicking AIDS Out Game' and the 'message game' that prove the effectiveness of a learner-centred method. Therefore, I argue that sex(uality) peer education programmes must use a learner-centred participatory approach which places the gendered lives and identities of learners as the key resources (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002; Pattman, 2006; Jackson and Weatherall, 2010; Jewkes, 2013).

Beyond the findings of the research, my research process has the potential to inspire and encourage other feminist activist scholars who want to embed their research within a local NGO, especially as an 'outsider'. When I first approached this research project, I was unaware of the work of SHEA and its sex(uality) peer education programme. After research on Google I found the contact information for SHEA and immediately sent an email explaining what I wanted to do and my previous experience in feminist spaces. In the following weeks, I met with Lorna and discussed how the research could most benefit the organisation and my own research interests. From then on, I was in regular communication with SHEA staff to organise the two focus group discussions and follow-up interviews. I understand that luck may have been on my side; nevertheless my research story illustrates the power of reaching out to NGOs and persistence.

It is also significant to note that there were various limitations to the research project. Language was an obvious limitation for the focus group discussions as language shapes the way individuals create and give meaning to their experiences (Brayton, 1997: 7). This is especially true in relation to how young people talk and think about the most sensitive topics of their life, including sex(uality). Given my limited knowledge and proficiency in isiXhosa, the focus group discussions were performed in English. I considered hiring a translator, but after talking with Lorna and my supervisors, we

decided that inviting a translator to the discussions would interrupt the informal, open and confidential space that I wished to create. Additionally I did not have the funds to hire and pay a translator. Due to the limitations of an English-only interview space, I faced challenges in creating a productive rapport with the research participants, which is essentially a matter of establishing trust between researcher and subject (Watts, 2006). Thus, I strove to be as honest and open as possible during the data collection so participants trusted my researcher position and the overall research process.

In addition, the mere nature of research on sex(uality) of young people lent itself to limitation. I did not expect all participants to feel comfortable talking to a stranger honestly and candidly about one's sex(uality). As Davidson (2007) noted, "gender research is tainted with suspicion of bias, a radical political agenda, and the threat of contamination by the mere use of the word *sexuality*" (p. 380). Therefore, I had to be tactful with my use of the word sex(uality) given its multiple meanings and definitions. I also had to be mindful that many different factors could influence the accuracy of self-reported intimate behaviour and that there is always the possibility of over- or under-reporting (Visser, 2007: 685). In light of these limitations, I sought to create the space where participants could insert their own meanings of sex(uality) education.

Given that peer education in the field of HIV prevention and sex(uality) is relatively understudied, future research could extend this study in two ways. First, the data is based on participants' retrospective accounts of their experiences with a sex(uality) peer education programme. Even though their experiences may have been recent, retrospective accounts can present challenges to accurate recall of interactions and events (Garcia, 2009). Additional research on this topic would greatly benefit from ethnographic observations in the classroom in order to identify the ways PFs and PEs experience the programme. In addition, it would be useful to conduct a comparative study with programmes that existed outside of the donor-partner dynamic and in which PFs and PEs had the ability to use a learner-centred participatory approach with a focus on challenging gender identities and constructions.

In conclusion, even within a learner-centre participatory approach it must be acknowledged that schools-based sex(uality) education programmes alone are unlikely

to bring about significant positive changes in young people's sexual behaviour and decision-making (Mason-Jones et al., 2011). While sex(uality) education programmes are a key dimension in the fight against HIV amongst young people (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002), if sex(uality) peer education is to operate at its fullest potential, issues around sex(uality) need to be openly discussed beyond the peer education context (Visser, 2007). There is a multitude of pressures from peers, parents, and media that influence a young person's experience and knowledge of sex(uality), and which may contradict the teachings of the programme. As Jackson and Weatherall (2010) found in their study, one must remain cognisant that 'critical sexuality education may meet as much with resistance as acceptance' because of the moral conservatism in the broader society and culture that cannot be ignored. In the case of teaching sex(uality) in South Africa, young people are bombarded with mixed messages of a rational sexual morality and 'safe sex' on one hand, and the sexualised media messages of women and the connection between multiple partners and masculinity on the other hand (Posel, 2005). This raises essential questions about the limitations of a sex(uality) peer education programme within a strongly patriarchal and gendered society. It compels us to critically investigate how much can be done to change sexual behaviour in a school setting alone and to explore other avenues of intervention that take serious the inclusion of parents, teachers, community leaders, and media outlets.

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