


# Merging Lesotho's opposed education systems for successful comprehensive sexuality education

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**Dates:**

Received: 25 Jan. 2023

Accepted: 11 Jan. 2024

Published: 11 Apr. 2024

**How to cite this article:**

Mokotso, R.I., 2024, 'Merging Lesotho's opposed education systems for successful comprehensive sexuality education', *Inkanyiso* 16(1), a64. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ink.v16i1.64>

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Through decolonising autoethnography, I propose that comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) be collaboratively delivered by *Lebollo* and mainstream school systems. I started out by flattering United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) work on CSE but lamented the organisation's focus on conventional education while ignoring the oldest indigenous institution that had long taught CSE. Additionally, I discovered that *Lebollo* is not only disregarded but also held accountable for the mainstream CSE's failure. In order to disprove this charge, I conducted an analysis of the *Lebollo* educational system using a decolonising interculturality perspective. I proposed that colonialism plays a part in the conflict between the two educational systems, which not only encourages avoidance of *Lebollo* but also negatively affects its transformation from ancestral *Lebollo*, failing to provide high-quality CSE. However, the setbacks are viewed as a chance for *Lebollo* to demand mainstream CSE. Decolonising interculturality is therefore necessary as both sides interact without appropriating one another's educational foundations. Decolonial pedagogy for stakeholders in these school systems is proposed as a strategy to bring the two antagonistic systems together. The intention is to raise awareness of colonial divisions and the understanding that the two distinct school systems can rely on one another. To allow students from these two schooling systems to traverse across the border dividing them and draw on various learning experiences for effective CSE, border pedagogy is suggested as a solution.

**Contribution:** The study adds to the ongoing global discussion on the acceptance of indigenous pedagogies and epistemologies.

**Keywords:** border pedagogy; comprehensive sexuality education; decolonial pedagogy; decolonising interculturality; indigenous education system; *Lebollo* School.

## Introduction

According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO 2021:11), comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) has grown in popularity and importance over the past decade. Comprehensive sexuality education grew out of an educational effort that began in many countries as a human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) prevention, population control, or reproductive education initiative. Cheetham (2015:11) defines CSE as an age-appropriate, culturally relevant method of teaching about sex and relationships by providing scientifically accurate, realistic and nonjudgmental information. It allows students to explore their own beliefs and attitudes and develop decision-making, communication and risk-avoidance skills related to various areas of sexuality. It is thought to enhance knowledge and understanding; explain and clarify feelings, values, and attitudes; create or reinforce skills; and promote and maintain risk-reducing behaviours.

Lesotho was selected by UNESCO to improve the delivery of CSE to young people, recognising that Basotho youth face health challenges such as early sexual contact, teenage pregnancy, the spread of HIV and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), abortion, sexual abuse and violence (UNESCO 2016). Through the efforts of UNESCO, CSE was included in the school curriculum. Because of its sensitivity, it could not be offered as a stand-alone subject, but found a place within the already recognised life skills, and thus was given the new name Life-Skills-Based Sexuality Education (LBSE) (UNESCO Lesotho 2016).

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's initiative to introduce CSE is commendable, especially given that young people in Lesotho are exposed to sexually transmitted health problems, as noted by UNESCO (2016). However, I have argued in this study that if CSE

continues to diverge from the *Lebollo* indigenous schooling and education that has existed throughout Basotho history since time immemorial, survived colonialism, and still thriving in the present, it is unlikely to produce the desired results. It is believed that the continued marginalisation, if not outright rejection, of Basotho indigenous schooling and education systems, which have been and continue to be responsible for the comprehensive sexuality education of the majority of Basotho, is a by-product of colonisation. Therefore, the paper calls for the inclusion of Basotho indigenous schooling and education systems for CSE to be effective. The strategy is presented in the context of decolonising interculturality.

Although I optimised *Lebollo* to contribute positively to CSE, there are also troubling questions that require some answers. Firstly, there is evidence that sex education has existed in Lesotho for centuries through indigenous *Lebollo* training and education. Yet, Lesotho is one of the southern African countries that has stimulated the intervention of UNESCO in sexuality and health education. The fundamental question is why the indigenous *Lebollo* School fails to provide sex education. The literature considers not only the failure of *Lebollo* sex education, where *Lebollo* graduates, rather than demonstrating knowledge of sexuality and health, exhibit vices, but also education that compromises the effectiveness of mainstream CSE taught in Western formal school systems (Mturi 2001; Mturi & Hennink 2005:134; UNESCO 2012:44). The question is why *Lebollo* continues to exist despite its failed educational mission. Secondly, there is the guiding principle of UNESCO that CSE should be culturally relevant, which means understanding the signals cultures express about sexuality (UNESCO 2015:20).

I initiated a dialogue that addressed these concerns, primarily advocating for the recognition of Basotho indigenous education and schooling systems through decolonising autoethnography (Datta 2021:2; Pham & Gothberg 2020:4096–4098; Woodworth & Fusco 2021:93–95). According to Woodworth and Fusco (2021:94), decolonising autoethnography is used when the goal of the study is to question how colonialism is inscribed in the creation of knowledge by moving through a critical self-reflection of one's position in the colonial system. The method is used to critique white, or Western, and/or Eurocentric imperialism as a naturalised site of knowledge creation while providing a critical reflective tool for decolonising indigenous knowledge. Decolonising autoethnography, as laid out by Woodworth and Fusco (2021:94), seeks to uncover how colonial violence is interwoven into educational institutions and shows how this violence is woven into everyday life both inside and outside of educational systems. I have used decolonising autoethnography to assume that the neglect or lack of integration of the Basotho indigenous education system in CSE is a consequence of colonialism. The goal is to critically examine how colonial schooling and education suppressed and continue to suppress Basotho indigenous schooling and education. The purpose of the reflection process is to challenge colonial interpretations of indigenous CSE as inapplicable and obstructive to conventional CSE.

Datta (2021:2) suggests three methods for doing decolonising autoethnography: (1) learning from current literature, (2) unlearning from community viewpoints on why existing literature, policy and decision-making processes deviate from community expectations, and (3) relearning from community visions, needs and perspectives. In accordance with Datta's recommendation, I examined the literature in the capacity of 'self' (auto) as an opportunistic complete member of Basotho indigenous culture to analyse what it says about the meeting of *Lebollo* sexuality education with conventional CSE. Then I began a reflective process by asking what the literature says about some issues in *Lebollo* sexuality education teaching and learning. The investigation then returned to see how *Lebollo* might be rearticulated to match the visions, needs and perspectives of the people it serves. The goal is to bring marginal voices to the centre, with the purpose of becoming what Datta (2021:2) refers to as an agent of change, as well as a political advocate for vulnerable people and social justice.

## Analytical framework

Decolonising autoethnography was combined with decolonising interculturality to provide a more comprehensive discussion. Decolonising interculturality evolves from critical interculturality and the terms are used interchangeably. Decolonising interculturality is defined by Dietz (2018:2) as the set of relationships that construct a particular society in terms of culture, ethnicity, language, religious denomination and civilisation. This structure is experienced through the interaction of various 'us' versus 'them' groups that typically interact in majority–minority relationships. In terms of political and socioeconomic power, these interactions are typically unequal and usually reflect historically developed traditions of showing or hiding, emphasising or denying diversity, stigmatising otherness, and discriminating against certain groups.

According to Walsh (2018:58), the decolonisation of interculturality requires a dramatic transformation of the dominant order and its cornerstone, Western modernity, as well as the persistence of colonial power. It reveals the lived legacy as well as the long-term possibilities of dominance, oppression, exclusion, and colonial difference manifested in social structures and institutions such as education and the state. The focus of decolonising interculturality, according to Fleuri and Fleuri (2017:9), is not on ethnic and cultural diversity, but on the distinctions established by the colonial pattern of power in almost every aspect of society. It is about understanding and promoting intercultural understanding in the fields of politics, society, ethics and education.

For the purposes of this article, the decolonising interculturality has three implications. Firstly, it provides an analytical approach to unequal relations describing the 'us' and the 'other' created by colonial history, where the 'us' is defined by a group that has adapted to Western modernity and controls the dominant Western social, political, economic and educational systems. The term 'other' refers to an indigenous

group that is marginalised and controls indigenous institutions such as the *Lebollo*. Secondly, it is necessary to question the relationship between colonial logic, conventional education and indigenous school systems and to address the problems that indigenous education has in relation to Western education. In general, the purpose of the study is to show how colonial thinking should be rewritten and the knowledge legitimised by indigenous education redefined epistemologically. That is, to emphasise the importance of considering the complexity and ambiguity that arise during the educational process when different bodies of information collide.

## Returning Basotho *Lebollo* indigenous education to its rightful place

From the introduction of Western education by Christian missionaries in the 1830s to the present, the traditional Basotho educational institution has been marginalised and misrepresented. Firstly, *Lebollo* was stripped of its educational aspects and turned into a ceremonial. Many authors, including Casalis (1861:181), Ellenberger (1912:281), Manyeli (1995:225), and Gill (2010:54), define *Lebollo* as an 'initiation' or 'circumcision' school. While *Lebollo* is recognised as a school, it is not a school that provides education, but rather a school that provides certification for performing certain rites, or a school that views circumcision (the removal of the clitoral hood in females and the removal of the foreskin in males, often performed as a cultural or religious practice marking the transition to adulthood) as a qualification. One could argue that such an invention served and continues to serve to disqualify *Lebollo* from educational elements because it did not conform to colonial educational norms. That is, to distinguish those who participate in initiation or circumcision from those who attend the true Western school system. According to Walsh (2007:225), colonialism promoted Western hegemony by portraying Eurocentric education as 'universal' while classifying alternative types of education as folkloric at best.

Dietz (2018:8) argues that the arbitrary selection of an educational system and its institutionalisation as a national educational system has resulted in a hegemonic habitus that is passed down through intergenerational transmission as the 'normality' and 'naturalness' of aligning knowledge with this standardised educational and schooling system. As a result, other educational systems that do not meet the standards of the normalised educational system are seen as 'school problems'. Dietz's remarks lead to the second point, that *Lebollo* is frequently described as anti-social due to its anti-Western school system. Since colonial times, *Lebollo* has been castigated for producing graduates who exhibit unkind behaviour. For example, Rolland (1868), a colonial official in Lesotho, reported to the colonial administration that *Lebollo* was a conspiracy against the government and its social services because of its secrecy and symbolic language that only those who attended it understood. *Lebollo* is also accused of forcing school-age youth to leave school to study *Lebollo*

education, which is incompatible with Western formal school education. Those who return to Western-type schools, scorn and berate their classmates and teachers for their lack of *Lebollo* knowledge (IRIN 2011; Mohlaloka, Jacobs & De Wet 2016:27; Sello 2018). In contrast, Baker (2012:14) notes that the foundations of colonialism and Eurocentrism were based on the constructed schooling of the prototype of whiteness, which was then universalised as the only or best form of education. As a result, all who are not white are excluded or must acculturate. This Eurocentric notion of education provides a strong justification for the assumption that all other educational systems that are not white are inferior. The inferior educational systems are excluded and alienated. The classification of *Lebollo* as anti-social and anti-official education system means further exclusion and alienation because its secrecy does not allow acculturation. It also subjects it to differential treatment and targeted segregation.

The curriculum and subjects offered at *Lebollo* are the next topics I would like to discuss. *Lebollo* can be defined as a 2–8-month group education programme in which girls and boys are taught separately cultural values and philosophy, personal and family duties, comprehensive sex and health education (CSHE), and duties to one's clan and people (Ansell 2009:25). *Lebollo* is also said to have classes that cultivate *bohloeki* [purity], *thuto-kelello* [knowledge], *makhabane* [virtues], *leruo* [economic progress], and *boqapi le bokheleke* [creativity and eloquence] (Maharasoia & Maharaswa 2004:9). Graduates of *Lebollo* (*babolli*), on the other hand, are accused of immorality, sex abuse, early child marriage and crime (Liphoto 2021; Mabale 2020:50; Sello 2018; Rolland 1868). Mr Liau, the initiation schools coordinator who is also a leader of the *Mekhoa Le Meetlo ea Basotho* (LMM), has advised against devaluing the courses taught at *Lebollo* or even acculturating *Lebollo* to meet modern demands. Mr Liau dismissed the widespread claim that *Lebollo* teaching produces undesirable behaviour. According to Liau, *Lebollo* offers topics that are culturally appropriate and thus attractive to youth (IRIN 2011). Gill (2010:226) confirms that many Basotho, both men and women, feel incomplete if they do not supplement their modern education with information from *Lebollo*, which is why there are always older people among *Lebollo* graduates. The discrediting of the content and courses taught at the *Lebollo* School in some ways perpetuates the colonial mentality of destroying indigenous education systems. According to Santos (2016:18), colonial domination means the intentional destruction of foreign knowledge systems. In addition to the genocide of indigenous peoples, there was also what Santos refers to as epistemicide, the erasure of the knowledge of colonised peoples. Epistemicide refers to the erasure of indigenous epistemologies, or ways of knowing that go back to the ancestors. According to Santos (2018:6–8), colonialism considers Eurocentric epistemology as the only source of valid knowledge and the 'other' – non-Western – as the realm of ignorance. In this case, it is reasonable to argue that *Lebollo* is a victim of colonial epistemicide.

The final point to consider when discussing *Lebollo* is the issue of 'secrecy'. The pedagogical validity of *Lebollo* is

questioned because all teaching and learning activities are kept confidential. For example, Rolland (1868) refers to *Lebollo* as a 'school of Satan', or a hidden association with its secrets and passwords, private ceremonies and signals, in contrast to (Christian) Western education, which is open in its learning and teaching activities and the rewards for educational accomplishments. Furthermore, Manyeli (1995:233) asserts that the secrecy surrounding *Lebollo* created a negative reaction from Westerners who assumed that there are immoral principles or behaviours that must remain hidden at all costs. In fact, *Lebollo* operates on the basis of a secret that is closely guarded. The fundamental question is whether one can conclude that this secrecy serves to protect evil, as is believed. How do the Basotho justify this? According to Manyeli (1995:233), the secrecy is based on the belief that *Lebollo* teaching programmes could be harmful if disseminated outside the *Lebollo* framework, especially lessons on sexuality, which require an appropriate mode of dissemination. In a consultation meeting on male circumcision and HIV prevention organised by the Ministry of Health, Dr T. Letsie, who claimed to be entrusted by King Letsie III with the care of Basotho culture, claimed that the *Lebollo* used secrecy as part of the struggle for liberation from colonialism. Both explanations could be correct. Manyeli's assertion is linked to the general philosophy of African education, namely preparationism, which Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2002:231) define as a planned pedagogy that prepares learners for their soon-to-be-adult positions. Manyeli (1995:233) agrees that *Lebollo* learners are prepared to engage in sexual acts for procreation within marriage setting soon after graduation. In contrast, Dr Letsie's assertion that secrecy was developed in resistance to colonialism may be true. Haliburton (1975:125) and Weisfelder (1974:403) agree with Dr Letsie that *Lebollo* was a weapon used by the decolonial movement of *Lekhotla la Bafo* LLB (League of Commoners) to fight for decolonisation.

Secrets kept in *Lebollo* are still a form of resistance to colonialism, which means that secrecy in *Lebollo* is a colonial creation. According to Fegan (2020:33), colonial efforts are based on understanding indigenous peoples and establishing and demonstrating their inferiority. The strategy is to invalidate and delegitimise indigenous ways of knowing, because by admitting that such knowledge structures are as legitimate as Western epistemology, one admits that colonialism's claim to political, economic, and cultural dominance is false. *Lebollo* education, then, refers to education that is concerned with the creation and affirmation of knowledge rooted in the resistance experiences of a social group that has continually faced injustice, oppression, and destruction as a result of colonialism. *Lebollo*'s goal is to enable the oppressed social group to represent the world as their own and in their own terms, because only in this way can they change it according to their ideas.

## **Lebollo comprehensive sex education**

Sex education occupies an important place in the *Lebollo* curriculum (Mturi 2001; Mturi & Hennink 2005:131; Khau

2012:62). Manyeli (1995:229) vividly describes the topics and skills taught in *Lebollo*'s comprehensive sexuality education. First and foremost, students are introduced to sexuality as a representation of human power and the right to procreate. Human reproduction is explained in the context of a comprehensive inclusion of other humans and the role of ancestors as the source of human fertility. This means that the understanding relates not only to attitudes, behaviours and skills, but also to mental competencies. It also means that knowledge of sexual matters does not depend on the individual, but includes other people and spiritual beings. This means that comprehensive sexuality education at *Lebollo* School is approached from the indigenous African epistemology of holism. According to Morcom (2017:123), indigenous holistic epistemology is an approach to education that takes into account all the elements that make up the self. The four dimensions that make up the self are the emotional, intellectual, physical and spiritual dimensions. Thus, human power in sexuality refers to the intellectual human element, that is, the cognitive understanding of the meaning of sexuality; the right to procreate refers to the emotional element, that is, the sense of personal responsibility and choice in sexual activity; the involvement of others refers to the physical component of sexuality, while the ancestors as sources of humanity represent the spiritual dimension.

Manyeli (1995:234) mentions moral education as another aspect of comprehensive sex education, in which students are taught the dangers of fornication, adultery and infidelity. At the end of the programme, both male and female students are told, '*bohlola ha bo sale mona*', which translates as 'fornication is left here'. Sexuality and family life are two other issues related to infidelity, according to Manyeli (1995:234). Marriage, understood in the context of family and tribal life, is used to explain human sexuality. Marriage is both an ethical and a religiously sacred commitment. Marriage is the unique opportunity that reveals a couple's willingness to give back to society by taking on the task of keeping the chain of generations going. The emphasis against fornication and on marriage in sex education is based on the African epistemology of *Ubuntu* – '*botho*' in Sesotho (Chuwa 2012:41–42). Chuwa defines *Ubuntu* epistemology as 'that which is commonly understood to be human'. *Botho* emphasises that a person or individual can only exist in relationships with others; thus, '*motho ke motho ka batho*', an individual achieves his or her true self in relationships with others. The doctrine against fornication and promotion of marriage in *Ubuntu* epistemology is based on the expectations and belief systems of the family and community or tribe rather than on the sexual freedom, rights or morality of the individual. According to Chuwa (2012:13), marriage and procreation are crucial because immortality is important in African societies. Everything revolves around it. Marriage is of great importance in traditional African society because it is the main source of social and personal immortality. Marriage brings together all the members of a given community: the dead, the living, and those yet to be born. Here all the dimensions of time meet, and the entire drama of history is repeated, renewed and revived. The importance of marriage

stems from the fact that it ensures the continuity of life and community. Consequently, sexuality and marriage are neither a personal nor a private matter. Adultery is forbidden in order to maintain the rhythm of life of the tribe.

An important practical component of the *Lebollo* School is circumcision. According to Mabile (1906:249), circumcision is a practical component of sex education that serves hygienic purposes. Mabile's assertion is consistent with Maharasa and Maharasa's (2004:9) claim that *bohloeki* [cleanliness] is central to the *Lebollo* curriculum. Ansell (2009:25) also notes that the entire process of sex education culminates in the circumcision of boys and genital cutting of girls, resulting in both a physical and symbolic transformation. The concept underpins the notion that the African education system is based on a preparatory philosophy. Teaching and learning are organised to prepare youth to assume adult roles and functions in the family, tribe or clan. The purpose of learning and teaching sexuality is to equip boys and girls with gender-specific skills to prepare them to participate in sexual activities. According to Magesa (1997:143–144), circumcision prepares adolescents to properly manage their sexuality, marry, and raise children. Sexual relations are a means to an end, namely experiencing the goodness of sexual and procreative experiences. However, to achieve this end, sexuality must be used in a healthy way. Therefore, circumcision and genital cutting serves as a pragmatic component of physically healthy, hygienic sexual education.

## Complementing mainstream and *Lebollo* comprehensive sexuality education by each other

This paper is primarily concerned with arguing against the success of mainstream CSE without acknowledging the long-standing indigenous Basotho sex education. The discussion of *Lebollo* has debunked colonial myths about *Lebollo*, refuted its misrepresentation, and given it its proper place and role in CSE. So, the question arises, why does *Lebollo* also need to be addressed in the context of CSE? Why cannot *Lebollo* be the solution to escalating sex-related health problems with devastating consequences, such as early sexual engagement, teenage pregnancy, the spread of HIV and AIDS, abortion, sexual abuse, and violence? The answer to these questions is found in the thesis of the decolonising interculturality. It is worth recalling that colonialism left no stone unturned. Maldonado-Torres (2007:243) and Mignolo (2009:40) use the term 'coloniality' to describe the profound effects of colonialism. Coloniality refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define contemporary cultural and educational systems far beyond the strict confines of colonial administrations. It lives on in books, academic performance criteria, cultural patterns, common sense, people's self-image, self-actualisation, and a host of other aspects of modern life. In a sense, we as modern subjects are constantly exposed to coloniality. People's lives are influenced and controlled by it in every way. Although it has resisted and survived colonialism, *Lebollo* was still

influenced by colonialism, which means that even the current *Lebollo* is not conducive to achieving CSE outcomes.

In 2018, the Minister of Tourism, Environment and Culture convened a dialogue where the government presented a draft law to regulate *Lebollo* schools. Participants included representatives from various ministries, directors of nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), religious organisations, and the National Initiation School Committee. Participants almost unanimously agreed that the pre-colonial *Lebollo* School has undergone significant changes. Most striking is the change in age limits for *Lebollo* schools, where boys and girls are admitted below the traditional age limit of 18. The main motivation for exceeding the mandatory traditional age limits is a monetary transaction, where enrolling the largest number of students means higher financial gains from the school fees collected (Liphoto 2021; Sello 2018). It follows that the colonial economic system and the Western educational system have had an impact on *Lebollo*. The pre-colonial *Lebollo* School was focused on cultural requirements and prepared young people for their role as future adults in society. Following Ball (2004:4), colonialism established a school system in which students were explicitly constituted as 'customers' whose educational credentials were a commodity to be traded for a job, rather than providing them with learning experience that would prepare them for life. In the discussion, the coordinator of the Initiation Schools Committee, Mr Tumelo Makolometsa, admitted that underage *Lebollo* graduates often experiment on the wrong platforms after leaving the institutions (Liphoto 2021; Sello 2018). In other words, they apply their knowledge of sexuality outside of marriage, which contributes to an increase in premarital and child pregnancies. This is inconsistent with the African educational philosophy of preparationism, in which students are prepared for their immediate role as soon-to-be adults. Indeed, *Lebollo* graduates, regardless of their age, acquire the cultural status of men and women through their graduation.

The second reason for *Lebollo*'s failure in CSE delivery is its lack of reach. *Lebollo* does have a relatively high enrolment rate of about 10,000 boys per year (Makatjane, Hlabana & Letete 2016:5), but this number is very low compared to enrolment rates in mainstream schools. *Lebollo* is one of the indigenous institutions that have been subject to colonial encroachment. According to Ellenberger (1912:285), the number of Basotho attending *Lebollo* declined as early as 1843, only 10 years after the missionaries arrived. Ellenberger explains that despite Basotho insistence that the abolition of *Lebollo* meant the decadence of the Basotho nation, the Christian missionaries did not back down from their stance that converts should not send their children to *Lebollo*. According to Gill (2010:81–82), those Basotho who gave in to missionary pressure and abandoned *Lebollo* and other indigenous traditions were rewarded with colonial benefits such as a Western lifestyle and colonial employment. The majority of Basotho understandably abandoned *Lebollo*. As a result, the CSE taught in *Lebollo* is so insignificant that it

would be unwise to blame *Lebollo* exclusively. The argument I make is that, just as I have argued that mainstream needs *Lebollo*, *Lebollo* also needs mainstream CSE for coverage and age-appropriate content. With this in mind, I propose a decolonising interculturality.

Walsh (2012:17) defines decolonising interculturality as occurring at the intersection of Western and indigenous education. It is essentially a strategy for strengthening and positioning functions based on a different epistemological logic than that of knowledge equality. That is, elevating indigenous knowledge to the status of Western knowledge or creating a space for Western knowledge that includes other knowledge resources. It is a logic that starts from difference, both colonial and ancestral differences that existed before colonialism. It is an entirely new approach based on the conviction that Western knowledge and indigenous thought alone are not enough. Putting *Lebollo* education back in its proper place does not attempt to remove it from modernity, nor does it attempt to equate it with mainstream education, but rather to highlight their differences, and these differences open the door to the realisation that each side has limitations and thus requires the other. It is unlikely that either education system alone will achieve satisfactory results in CSE in Lesotho.

## Opportunities for interculturality in the two education systems

The proposed decolonising interculturality stems from the recognition that there are some opportunities for interculturality in each of the two education systems. Beginning with mainstream CSE, it employs a 'culturally relevant and contextually appropriate' teaching and learning approach (UNESCO 2015:12). While the phrase 'culturally relevant and context-appropriate' is not used to refer to culturally existing institutions that provide CSE, such as *Lebollo*, it could be interpreted to mean that they must be taken into account because they are part of the cultural context. It follows that the notion of cultural relevance for mainstream CSE is consistent with Walsh's (2018:60) suggestion that decolonising interculturality is a process of transforming, rethinking, and reconceptualising structures and institutions to create space for reciprocal but still conflicting relationships between different cultural knowledges and ideas. It is an active process of negotiation and interrelation in which differences are not erased. In this understanding, education is seen as a process of building new understandings, coexistences, solidarities, and collaborations, with the goal of achieving a comprehensive outcome. Within the framework of interculturality, mainstream CSE affirms openness to collaborating with indigenous education to achieve expected outcomes without either side reaching a state of annihilation.

Mainstream CSE is defined as unlimited in Western prototype schools, but it also extends to settings outside of the school curriculum (UNFPA 2020:9–11). It is intended to serve various social groups, including children and young people not

enrolled in school, and it is tailored to the needs of different institutions such as correctional facilities. Although indigenous schools such as *Lebollo* are not mentioned among the institutions identified by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), it could be argued that they are included as well. Comprehensive sexuality education outside of school broadens the scope and opportunities for flexibility. It provides a platform for other forms of education, such as *Lebollo*, to find a place within the framework of conventional CSE. This does not, however, imply that each of the two systems should compromise its uniqueness. Instead, as Santos (2016:22) suggests, they come together with the understanding that all knowledges are incomplete. As Guilherme (2019:6) explains, the bringing together of the two systems of education through a decolonising interculturality framework is to acknowledge the existence of multiple cultures as autonomous entities, heterogeneous in essence, but which also focus on their dialogical interaction, on the elastic nature of cultural identities, and on the dynamics of intercultural encounters. Thus, decolonising interculturality seeks to create a space where mainstream CSE information and *Lebollo* CSE come into dialogue outside the formal curriculums of each.

*Lebollo* also offers some opportunities for cross-cultural exchange. As previously stated, the current *Lebollo* differs from the pre-colonial *Lebollo*. That is, *Lebollo* is not static, but is influenced by modern forces. As Walsh (2007:230) advances, the flexibility of indigenous knowledge should be conceived as a consciousness whose roots derive from the lived experience of colonial histories. It was founded on a collective sense of belonging, an unlearning of what dominant society has instilled and a relearning of past and present ancestral knowledge, and a focus on the epistemic work that must be done in response to current demands. Survival through struggle for existence and recognition is the lived experience of *Lebollo* in colonial history. At a consultation meeting on male circumcision and HIV prevention, Dr T. Letsie claimed that *Lebollo* used secrecy as part of the liberation struggle from colonialism. He did note, however, that *Lebollo* could now be used to free people from the HIV scourge (Ministry of Health 2006:16).

Dr Letsie's assertion is especially significant in terms of decolonising interculturality. *Lebollo's* struggle continues, this time for re-existence. Walsh (2018:95) identifies 're-existence' as the mechanism by which communities generate and develop everyday life and power, so as to contest the hegemonic project which has marginalised, silenced, and negatively portrayed existence from colonial times to the present. In the context of interculturality, re-existence refers to the pattern of ways to exist, but it resists re-existing at the margins; instead, it seeks to occupy a place at the centre to build up society and life despite adverse conditions, such as discrimination and marginalisation, and overcome these conditions in order to make a social and cultural contribution. *Lebollo* struggles to re-emerge in order to serve the Basotho. Bulled (2013) observed that when traditional healers were promised information about sexually transmitted infections

(STIs) and HIV, as well as collaborations with biomedical health care providers, the traditional healers, who play a vital role in health education, such as circumcision, became very appreciative. They viewed this strategy as more empowering because it guarantees that: (1) a significant cultural practice is retained; (2) traditional healers' techniques are not thought to contribute to HIV transmission; and (3) traditional healers can offer some kind of protection for the people of Lesotho. Appreciation from traditional healers does not imply celebration for advancement to the standard of Western biomedicine, but rather decolonisation of *Lebollo* and enabling it to re-exist in the centre of contributing to Basotho's wellness. This article acknowledges *Lebollo's* fight for centrality through what Walsh (2012:17) refers to as epistemic interculturality, which is the politics of epistemic character in relation to colonial designs that situate indigenous knowledge as local and non-modern, in contrast to the supposed universality and timeliness of westernised knowledge. According to Walsh, epistemic interculturality proposes an articulation of knowledge that takes into account the intercultural co-construction of various epistemologies, in which knowledge is never complete but always 'under construction'.

## Recommendation

To integrate *Lebollo* with mainstream CSE, two different pedagogies are proposed: one for teachers, *basuoe* (*Lebollo* teachers), and stakeholders in both school systems, and one for students in both school systems. In this context, the term pedagogy is used in accordance with Giroux and Simon's (1988:12) analysis of pedagogy as a deliberate effort to influence the production of knowledge and identity within a given set of social relations. It is a strategy for persuading people to adopt a specific behavioural change. The goal of this approach is to create experiences that will organise, disorganise and reorganise people's perceptions of their natural and social worlds in specific ways. It is the process of producing knowledge to transform consciousness through the interaction of various actors including teachers, stakeholder participants in specific knowledge contexts and learners. Therefore, I propose pedagogies targeted at those various agencies. For teachers, *basuoe*, and stakeholders in the two education systems, *Lebollo* and conventional schooling, I propose what is known as decolonial pedagogy praxis, which is popularly understood to be inspired by critical theory (Bayraktar 2009; Coburn & Gormally 2017; Bizzell 1999; Giroux 2004). According to Granados-Beltrán (2016:182), decolonial pedagogy is used in teacher development programmes and by other stakeholders in education. It is a deliberate educational process or pedagogy that transforms teachers and other players in the education field into conscious of the other, their different culture, experience, voices and knowledge, as well as how educational situations are cultural spaces. Acceptance of the other as an equal who belongs in the same field and has the capacity to play the same game and play it well is required for recognition of the other and his or her different culture. Recognising experiences, knowledge and voice in educational

communication has to do not only with how teachers and other players in education master school dynamics, but also with how they interpret and incorporate knowledge gained from other sites outside the school space. It also entails recognising how marginalised groups' voices have been silenced, being self-aware of how the distribution of power in education delivery may maintain those silences, and devising strategies to respond to such situations. Decolonial pedagogy assumes a planned education programme that aims to promote a new understanding that each of the different cultural schools has the potential to positively contribute to the teaching and learning of CSE. More importantly, those in the mainstream education sector should be conscious that *Lebollo* has been unnecessarily marginalised and silenced, depriving its positive role in the teaching of CSE. Both *Lebollo* and mainstream education can learn the CSE content from each other and create the possibility of incorporation in each other's space of teaching and learning for the purpose of comprehensiveness of sexuality education.

A decolonial pedagogy facilitates the recognition of what Santos (2007:18) calls an ecology of knowledge, that is based on the idea of acknowledging the existence of a diversity of knowledge about the world beyond the knowledge taught by the Western or *Lebollo* school system. It renounces the universalisation of Western forms of knowledge and welcomes the diversity and plurality of knowledge, including the knowledge of *Lebollo* CSE. To engage in the ecology of knowledge, Santos (2007:30) calls for a radical form of learning, a learning that moves from knowing to not knowing. That is, the forgetting or unlearning that is inherent in the reciprocal learning process. When engaging in the ecology of knowledge, it is important to compare the new knowledge that is learned with that which was forgotten or unlearned. Thus, creating a state in which newly learned knowledge becomes more valuable than that which has been temporarily forgotten, when in fact the learning of knowledge builds upon that which already exists. Forgetting or becoming ignorant makes those who learn beyond the limits of their knowledge reflect on the reality that all ways of knowing need each other. The importance of the ecology of knowledge is that it invites those involved in CSE who come from different school systems to engage in a new learning process where each learns from the other. The honesty of learning from each other is based on the principle of including one's own knowledge of CSE and opening up to the knowledge of others as it is valuable and necessary to achieve the desired outcome of CSE.

For students in both schooling systems, I propose border pedagogy (Cervantes-Soon & Carrillo 2016; Coburn & Gormally 2017; Giroux 1991; Walsh & Townsin 2015). Border pedagogy, according to Cervantes-Soon and Carrillo (2016:12), is an educational strategy for living together-in-difference which encourages learning as a process towards intercultural competence development over time. With this new border pedagogy, compassion and critical humility are core concepts acquired through mindfulness to embrace discomfort, knowing that the goal is not to reject or abandon

difference, but create a new hybrid subjectivity that is uniting. It is impossible to create a new hybrid subjectivity without interrogating the forces of coloniality so as to develop the skills and dispositions to be deeply aware of cultural differences to the point where students can respect differences and stand together in solidarity with cultural others. Being able to stand in solidarity with others transcends the notion of tolerance allowing students to enter a third space where negotiation is possible so much that a hybrid consciousness is attainable leading to the internal outcome of ethno-relativism. When students are guided to realise a hybrid consciousness, it becomes possible that they develop a better place to embrace a critical intercultural citizenship where through their communication, behaviour and actions they model how different cultural realities are equally viable and possible in the present moment and into the future. It is likely that border pedagogy will produce students from both *Lebollo* and mainstream education who are capable of challenging colonialism and Western education knowledge and integrating it into *Lebollo* knowledge in mutual appreciation and reference. Students will be able to comprehend sexuality education from cultural and indigenous perspectives as well as from the Western school system. Instead of seeing others from different school systems as adversaries in CSE, they will develop a sense of solidarity in knowledge sharing and build on collaborative efforts to overcome Lesotho's prevalent sexuality problems.

A workable solution for effective CSE is what Hayes and Sondra (1996:6) describe as the development of new consciousness which demands the reshaping of mental borders in order to create a new process of thought. The process that departs from convergent thinking, analytical reasoning that tends to use rationality to move towards a single goal (a Western mode), to divergent thinking, characterised by movement away from set patterns and goals and towards a more whole perspective, one that includes rather than excludes. This can be achieved if teachers are mobilised to forge community bonds beyond Western schooling system to include other educational institutions like *Lebollo*. Teachers should take responsibilities to help learners and, of course, communities to transform power relationships among dominant and subordinate groups in order to create an alternative form of knowledge that embraces rather than denies people's diverse identities and histories. In border pedagogy, teachers and, of course, *basuoe* assume more agency and power in supporting social change efforts through their teaching practices.

## Concluding remarks

The solution to any social problem is through collaboration, not division. Therefore, for CSE to succeed, it is important to find out what causes division and what contributes to cooperation. Colonial history has created two distinct cultures in Lesotho. One is the culture that is oriented towards Western civilisation and embraces the Western education system. The other is the indigenous culture, the culture of

colonial resistance that sustains the indigenous education system. Unfortunately, the two systems provide parallel CSE, and if the two do not come together, I think it is unlikely that they will produce the expected CSE results. Thus, if the cause of division is colonialism, then a counter approach is needed. Therefore, I propose a decolonising strategy of interculturality that employs a decolonising pedagogy aimed at changing the perceptions of those involved in mainstream or Western education and those responsible for indigenous education. Cross-boundary pedagogy will also be optimised for students in both educational institutions to foster the collaborative skills necessary to promote CSE.

## Acknowledgements

### Competing interests

The author has declared that no competing interest exists.

### Author's contributions

R.I.M. the sole author of this research article.

### Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

### Funding information

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

### Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

### Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the author.

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