INTRODUCTION

Lesotho has the third highest HIV prevalence in the world with 260,000 out of 2,000,000 people, most of them still in school, living with HIV and AIDS. Of these people, 56% are women (UNAIDS, 2008). Education has been described as a ‘vaccine’ against HIV and AIDS (Coombe, 2003) because of relatively lower rates of HIV infection among people with higher levels of educational participation. This places teachers at the forefront of the pandemic as prevention agents expected to teach about sexualities and safer sex practices and therefore equip learners with the necessary knowledge to make informed decisions regarding their sexual lives. But teachers are also gendered and sexual beings. So how does this enable or interfere with teachers’ effectiveness in handling sexuality and HIV and AIDS in education?

This chapter draws attention to how teachers’ personal identities play a key role in how they tackle sexuality and HIV and AIDS in the classroom and highlights the impossibilities and contradictions embedded in female teacherhood. It presents data on how Basotho women teachers see themselves as women and the implications of such positioning on their experiences of teaching sexuality education in rural schools. Teachers’ drawings and stories are used as case material for thinking about the role of teachers’ gendered and sexual identities within the sexuality education classroom.

WHO AM I?

Doing research on issues of sexuality in the rural villages of Lesotho forced me to acknowledge the baggage that I brought into the field in terms of my biases. I am a divorced woman and a science teacher interested in sexuality education in rural schools in the age of HIV and AIDS—an abominable combination for rural villagers. I was aware that my education and marital status positioned me as deviant in relation to the constructions of proper womanhood within the villages, where it is still believed that a woman does not need an education but a good husband. The villagers believed that in talking about sex I would be corrupting the participants into loose morals. The husbands thought I would incite their women to
divorce, and the women thought I was going to take off with their husbands. Thus, my choice of methodology and approach had to take into account all these factors so that I could gain the trust of the participants and all stakeholders.

**METHODOLOGY**

Guided by a feminist approach to research, the data production involved three phases: the preparation phase, the data production phase, and the debriefing phase. The preparation phase was intended to create better rapport between myself and the participants. The data production phase revolved around a ‘starting with ourselves’ framing. I placed myself at the centre of the inquiry as a participant-researcher, and I contributed my experiences as I employed the various methods. The debriefing phase served to address any issues that arose from partaking in the study.

Data was produced with eight purposively selected Basotho women science teachers from two rural secondary schools. The women had to be science teachers who had been involved in the teaching of sexuality education through the Population and Family Life Education (POP/FLE) framework and who are currently involved with teaching sexuality education in the life skills education curriculum. Drawings were used to explore how the women teachers see themselves as women and how their positioning is implicated in their teaching of sexuality education. The following prompt was used:

> In the space provided, draw a picture that represents your woman self. There are no good or bad drawings just draw. Below each drawing explain why you have chosen this representation and what it means to you.

**Figure 9.1. Drawing prompt.**

Drawing is a powerful technique for eliciting attitudes and beliefs and generating discussion around an issue of interest (Stuart, 2006). Martin (1998) also argued that drawings can offer an entry point and provide insight into the experiences and perceptions of the people producing the drawings. Additionally, Schratz and Walker (1995) observed:

> Where photographs can take us behind the scenes and allow us to share witness with the researcher, drawings can take us inside the mind of the subject … the ways in which people draw things, their relative size and placement of objects for example can at least give us a starting point from which to ask questions. (p. 77)

My choice to use drawing as the tool for data production was based on the sensitivity of the topic of sexuality, especially within a context in which talk about sex is highly taboo. Basotho communities still regard women as children under customary law (Guma, 2001). Thus, as children, women are expected to be sexually innocent. This implies that sex talk by women is against social norms. I