

Prof. Xavela Maluleke, Walter Sisulu University, South Africa

**The Sexual Health Programme for Puberty Rites for Girls
in the Rural Areas of the Limpopo Province, South Africa**

tmaluleke@wsu.ac.za

The paper is based on the findings of a completed study entitled “The utilisation of puberty rites for girls for sexuality education and prevention of HIV and AIDS among young people in the Limpopo Province, South Africa”. The purpose of the study was to determine ways of utilising the puberty rites for girls in the prevention of HIV and AIDS. The study objectives were to: determine the sexual-health risk behaviours of young people that could contribute to unintended pregnancy, STIs, HIV and AIDS in the Vhembe district; determine the perceptions of young people regarding sexuality, sexual health, STIs and HIV/AIDS; develop and implement a sexuality education programme. This paper presents the sexual health programme that was implemented in the puberty rites that aimed at providing information about sexual health that would enable young people to develop responsible sexual behaviours, mutual respect and good relationships. The sexual health programme assisted young people in understanding the human body; gaining knowledge and skills that would enable them to form attitudes; beliefs and values about their body image; sexuality and interpersonal relationships and take responsible steps to prevent teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STI), HIV and AIDS.

Professor Thelma Xavela Maluleke is a wife, mother of 3 children and grandmother of two. She holds a doctoral degree from the University of South Africa. She is currently employed as Associate Professor at Walter Sisulu University. She is an NRF rated researcher. She has published in accredited journals. She has authored and co-authored Life Orientation books for FET colleges published by NASOU VIA AFRICA. Her research experience is mainly in the area of sexuality, sexual health, HIV & AIDS and indigenous knowledge systems. She has been involved in consultancy work for different organisations.