



UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL™
INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

CHILDHOOD, SEXUALITIES

AND THE

POLITICS OF SCHOOLING



MONDAY,
24 AUGUST 2026



08:00 – 16:45
(SAST)



COASTLANDS SKYE HOTEL, UMHLANGA,
KWAZULU-NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA

HOST



SARCHI CHAIR IN GENDER AND CHILDHOOD
SEXUALITY, UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

INSPIRING GREATNESS

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

Across international contexts, schools have been found to be simultaneously context, risk and resource in the making of gender, childhood and sexuality. They are places where bodies, desire and relations of power are produced shaping young masculinities and femininities. They are also sites where sexual violence, coercion and abuse can take shape. For too long, dominant understandings place sexuality outside childhood. Children are imagined as innocent, asexual and in need of protection. Sexuality is treated as something that arrives later, with adulthood, from which children must be shielded. This conference begins from a different premise. Sexuality is not marginal to childhood. It is woven through how children come to know themselves, each other and the world. And because childhood is lived in school, sexuality is not at the margins of schooling either. It is schooling. This conference thinks critically about the relationship between childhood, sexuality and schooling. It asks how children and young people make sense of sexuality in the contexts in which they live, learn and relate to others. This conference is part of a

broader international conversation connecting South Africa and Spain through the SexAfin Project, engaged in collaborative inquiry into how sexuality is understood and experienced across different social worlds. We bring together researchers, practitioners and teachers from across contexts to examine the intersections of childhood, sexuality and schooling in contexts shaped by inequalities, poverty, diversity, shifting gender norms, digital cultures and the resurgent politics of anti-gender campaigns. How do children and young people make sense of sexuality within the specific social, cultural and institutional contexts in which they live? And what is the role of teachers? We invite sustained reflection on how schools become places where children and young people are not silenced or shamed but supported to think, speak and learn about sexuality in ways that are gender-just, ethical and life-affirming.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Dr Estel Malgosa

Universitat de Girona, Spain

Estel Malgosa holds a PhD in Anthropology and is a Juan de la Cierva postdoctoral researcher at the Faculty of Education, University of Girona (2026–2028). She works at the intersection of feminist studies, childhood studies and sexuality education. Her current research combines ethnography, participatory methodologies and new feminist materialist approaches to explore the entanglements through which sexuality, gender, consent and education are constituted. She is currently conducting an ethnographic study of consent practices in early childhood and is involved in several international projects on sexual and gender diversity and queer childhoods.

She completed her doctoral research on sexuality and childhood in public primary schools in the Barcelona metropolitan area within the framework of the SexAFIN-Catalonia project at the AFIN Research Group, Autonomous University of Barcelona. Between 2017 and 2025, she co-coordinated the SexAFIN-Catalonia participatory action research project with Bruna Álvarez, engaging more than 5,000 children through participatory methodologies.

She has published in leading international journals in the fields of sexuality, gender and childhood, including *Sexualities*, *Sex Education*, *Gender and Education*, *Children & Society* and *Reproductive Health*. She was also guest editor of the special issue entitled *Sexuality Through Children's Eyes: Experiences, Perceptions and Meanings* in *Children & Society*, which brings together contributions from both the Global North and the Global South.

She has contributed to knowledge exchange and social impact activities, including training programmes for families and educators. She also directed the documentary *Rethinking Sexuality Education*, broadcast on Catalan Public Television in November 2023, and led the national project *Rethinking Sexuality Education from a Child-Centred Gender Perspective* (2022).

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Associate Professor Bruna Alvarez

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain

Bruna Alvarez is an Associate Professor at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) and the co-director of AFIN research group. She leads the SexAFIN Project - a 10-year research initiative on children's and adolescents' sexualities in school settings. With over fifteen years of research experience, her work examines the politics of reproductive and sexual health through the lens of gender relations, exploring how institutional frameworks, labour markets, and cultural narratives shape people's reproductive decisions and sexual behaviours.

She holds a PhD from UAB (2017) and she has been a visiting researcher at the University of Cambridge (UK), De Montfort University (UK), Maynooth University (Ireland), the University of the West of England (UK) and Universidad Pedagógica Nacional del Estado de Chihuahua (México). Currently, she coordinates the Masters in Anthropology programme at UAB and supervises PhD and Masters students working on sexuality, childhood and adolescence.

PROGRAMME

MONDAY, 24 AUGUST 2026

08:00 – 08:50 REGISTRATION

08:50 – 09:00 WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS
Deevia Bhana

KEYNOTE I

09:00 – 09:45 **Estel Malgosa**
YOUNG CHILDREN'S ENTANGLEMENTS WITH SEXUAL CONSENT IN SPAIN

09:45 – 10:00 TEA

SESSION I

10:00 – 11:10 WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT SEXUALITY AND WHAT THEY WANT TO KNOW

Chair: Raksha Janak

1. From 'Knowing' to Competence: Theory and Politics Behind Learning Sexuality
Stefan Lucke
2. The Effects of Gender-Sensitive Orientation Programmes on First-Year Students' Understanding of Sexual Consent at a Higher Education Institution in Mpumalanga, Mbombela Municipality
Sinethemba Sakhile Mbonambi & Nokubonga Nokwanda Mazibuko
3. Jill is Different: Teachers' and Children's Responses to Intersex Bodies in a Children's Storybook in Early Schooling
Shaaista Moosa
4. Speaking the Unspeakable: Children's Negotiations of Sexuality Education in a South African Primary School
Renishma Dathoo



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SESSION II

11:10 – 12:20

CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOLING IN THE AGE OF DIGITAL SEXUAL CULTURES

Chair: Stefan Lucke

1. Teenage Boys, Digital Masculinity, and the Negotiation of Heterosexuality on Social Media
Raksha Janak
2. Porn, Pleasure and Power: Boys, Girls and Masturbation
Valerie Reddy
3. Schooling, Sex and Digital Cultures: Young People Negotiating Gender and Sexuality on Social Media
Laaqah Syed
4. No Nut November: Hegemonic Masculinity Among Black Boys in a South African Boarding School
Rabia Rizvi

12:20 – 13:20

LUNCH

KEYNOTE II

13:20 – 14:05

Bruna Alvarez

CONTESTED KNOWLEDGE: THE POLITICAL AND ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF CHILDREN'S SEXUALITY RESEARCH. THE EXPERIENCE OF 10 YEARS OF THE SEXAFIN PROJECT

ROUNDTABLE

14:05 – 15:05

FROM RESEARCH TO THE GROUND: CHILDHOOD SEXUALITY IN SCHOOLS

This roundtable brings together practitioners, NGO representatives and community-based organisations working on childhood sexuality, sexual violence, sexuality education and LGBTQ+ inclusion in South African schools. The discussion moves the conversation from the academic to the applied — asking what organisations working directly with children and schools see on the ground, what research has and has not offered them, where the gaps between scholarship and practice remain widest, and what a productive relationship between researchers, practitioners and communities working on childhood sexuality might look like.

Moderators: Stefan Lucke & Rabia Rizvi

1. Nonhlanhla Mkhize
2. Aluta Humbane
3. Sazi Jali
4. Prakashini Moodley
5. Phumelela Ngwenya
6. Nomakhosi Mabuza
7. Buyisiwe Sophazi
8. Nancy Strauss
9. Phalanndwa Muthuphei
10. Donovan Andrews
11. Vukani Mpungose

15:05 – 15:20

TEA

SESSION III

15:20 – 16:30

BEYOND HETERONORMATIVITY: SEXUAL DIVERSITY IN SCHOOLING

Chair: Rabia Rizvi

1. Fading the Norm: Queer Aesthetics and the Fade Haircut as Political Defiance in a South African School
Ndumiso Daluxolo Ngidi
2. The Politics of Survival: Identity Construction as Resistance Among Black Lesbian Youth
Prim-Rose Makhosazane Shabane
3. Does the Sexuality of Male Teachers Teaching Young Children Matter? Views from Foundation Phase Pre-service Teachers
Busisiwe Masondo
4. Men, Sexuality and Teaching Young Children: Narratives of In-service Same-sex Desiring Black African Male Foundation Phase (FP) Teachers in South Africa
Sandile Ndawonde

16:30 – 16:45

CLOSING REFLECTIONS AND THE WAY FORWARD

Deevia Bhana, Estel Malgosa & Bruna Alvarez

16:45

CLOSE

PARTICIPANTS

Aluta Humbane, *Injongo Movement & SILa Foundation For Children*
Human Rights Activist | Founder of the Injongo Movement

Busisiwe Masondo, *University of KwaZulu-Natal*
Master's Candidate, School of Education

Buyisiwe Sophazi, *KZN Department of Social Development*
Director for Children's Services

Deevia Bhana, *University of KwaZulu-Natal*
South African Research Chair in Gender and Childhood Sexuality, School of Education

Donavan Andrews, *Western Cape Department of Health*
Clinical Forensic Officer

Laaiah Syed, *University of KwaZulu-Natal*
PhD Candidate, School of Education

Nancy Strauss, *Trulife*
Managing Director

Ndumiso Daluxolo Ngidi, *Durban University of Technology*
Associate Professor | Director of the International Centre of Non-Violence

Nokubonga Nokwanda Mazibuko, *University of Mpumalanga*
Senior Lecturer | Chair of the Gender Forum

Nomakhosi Mabuza, *Hillview Secondary School*
Life Orientation Educator | Youth Advocate

Nonhlanhla Mkhize, *Lesbian and Gay Community and Health Centre*
Executive Director | Human Rights Advocate | Chair of the South African National AIDS Council Civil Society Forum LGBTI+ Sector

Phalanndwa Muthuphei, *KZN Department of Health*
Acting Director for Maternal, Child, Women's Health and Nutrition

Phumelela Ngwenya, *Mariannridge Secondary School*
Life Orientation Educator | Comprehensive Sexuality Education Facilitator

Prakashini Moodley, *KZN Department of Social Development*
Acting Programme Manager for Children's Services

Prim-Rose Makhosazane Shabane, *Durban University of Technology*
Lecturer, International Centre of Nonviolence

Rabia Rizvi, *University of KwaZulu-Natal*
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Raksha Janak, *University of Pretoria*
Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education

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Master's Candidate | HSRC Intern, School of Education

Sandile Ndawonde, *University of KwaZulu-Natal*
Master's Candidate, School of Education

Sazi Jali, *Trans Hope*
Human Rights Activist | Founder and Executive Director of Trans Hope

Shaaista Moosa, *University of KwaZulu-Natal*
Senior Lecturer, School of Education

Stefan Lucke, *University of KwaZulu-Natal*
Postdoctoral Fellow, School of Education

Valerie Reddy, *University of KwaZulu-Natal*
Research Associate | Educator

Vukani Mpungose, *loveLife*
Youth Activist | groundBREAKER