SEX EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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#ByeTaboo: Expanding Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Education[*]

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Abstract This article examines the design and implementation of the sexual and reproductive health online platform #ChauTabú (#ByeTaboo) in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from a practice perspective. Based on my experiences, I discuss the design process and the implementation challenges; reflect on what digital spaces can offer as education platforms, and how #ChauTabú relates to a rights-based approach to inclusive and feminist sexual and reproductive health.

Keywords: Sexual and reproductive health, education, Argentina, digital technology, sexuality, sexual diversity.

1 Introduction
The aim of this practice perspective article is to review the design – considering aspects prioritised in the development of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) education content – and implementation of the online platform #ChauTabú (Spanish for #ByeTaboo) by the Government of the City of Buenos Aires, Argentina. In addition to considering the design and implementation, this article reflects on the steps taken and the rationale for creating the platform. It also considers the challenges that arose during implementation, related to inherent limitations of digital platforms for SRHR education and the resistance of the Catholic church and religious civil society organisations, and the ways in which these were navigated. The article discusses how some of its particular features – such as a rights-based approach and fluid understanding of sexuality – were enabled by the particular Argentinian sociocultural and legal context and what this could mean for different contexts. While the case is taken from the capital city of Argentina, the fact that it is intended for expansion on a national scale means the lessons learnt from this experience can be of relevance to other countries. Specific consideration will be given to the religious similarities with Mexico and the role of the church and Christian religious associations as gatekeepers to SRHR education.

In Buenos Aires, data revealed high rates of internet penetration, with at least 89 per cent of the population over ten years of age having online access in their household in 2011 (INDEC 2012: 35). That access is presumed to be partly influenced by a scheme for netbook distribution among schoolchildren carried out by the national government since 2010, alongside trends of increased smartphone use in the country during the same period (*La Nación* 2015). In terms of sex-related use of the internet, the Argentine Internet Observatory established that online searches for pornography have increased 45 per cent in the last two years, and both young women (77 per cent) and men (94 per cent) aged 18–25 consume it widely (Rosemblat 2016). This means that pornography is an important source of information about sexuality in an environment that is mostly sexually conservative due to the influence of the Roman Catholic church. In this rather confusing situation the proliferation of pornography exists simultaneously with nipple censorship, which has caused activists who want to raise awareness on how to perform a breast self-examination to use male bodies in YouTube videos in order to avoid censorship, and to criticise it (MACMA 2016). Based on this high level of internet access, and its diverse sex-related uses, the development of a state-backed online platform to provide youth with certified information through an open channel was proposed by the local government. This could counter the abundance of inaccurate information about sexual and reproductive health (SRH) available online and the persisting challenges for the implementation of integral sex education at schools.

2 Background

SRHR learning 'begins early in young people's lives and, if done correctly, has potential to influence young people toward positive lifelong sexual reproductive health' (Levine 2011: 19). The World Health Organization (WHO) and the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development have attributed importance to a healthy sexual development for overall mental and physical wellbeing (Shtarkshall, Santelli and Hirsch 2007). #ChauTabú's main innovative features as a SRHR intervention are its digital nature and its treatment of sex and sexuality through a rights-based non-heteronormative approach.

Massey (1993) considers a place to have a particular specificity formed from a particular constellation of relations. Thus, she proposes 'places':

> can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings. And this in turn allows a sense of place which is extroverted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, which integrates in a positive way the global and the local… there are real relations with real content, economic, political, cultural between any local place and the wider world in which it is set (*op. cit.*: 66).

Her 'progressive sense of place' was conceived to avoid static conceptions and instead to expand the local to the global. Such a conception is relevant to the expansion of SRHR education through the

creation of virtual online communities and spaces for education. The idea of an online 'place' respects Massey's (1993) conceptualisation of dynamic places sustained through social interactions, which have now become digital and potentially anonymous. Hemingway (2008) has built on this idea, suggesting that digital platforms create opportunities for SRHR education in reconceptualised 'places' that have the capacity of disconcerting or displacing familiar terrain.

Scholars have identified a myriad of advantages that technology-based interventions – including online platforms – can offer. These include: their low cost; the potential for increased reach to remote and/ or underserved populations; improved flexibility for programming, customising and tailoring information (compared to alternative supports, e.g. printed material); the information available becoming of universal value; the ability to provide standardised information; interactivity; privacy and autonomy, which allow for self-directed learning; and portability (Edouard and Edouard 2012; Levine 2011; Guse *et al.* 2012). These features are particularly relevant in relation to online SRHR education for youth.

Berglas, Constantine and Ozer propose that a rights-based approach in youth SRH can be defined as:

> the intersection of four elements: an underlying principle that youth have sexual rights; an expansion of programmatic goals beyond reducing unintended pregnancy and STDs [sexually transmitted diseases]; a broadening of curricular content to include such issues as gender norms, sexual orientation, sexual expression and pleasure, violence, and individual rights and responsibilities in relationships; and a participatory teaching strategy that engages youth in critical thinking about their sexuality and sexual choices (2014: 63).

Basing youth education projects on this type of approach offers a challenge to conventional cultural and social dynamics of sexuality through the provision of accurate information in participatory interactive youth-centred spaces. Online spaces represent a particularly attractive resource for doing this given their anonymity and privacy.

That youth seek privacy in matters relating to their bodies and their relationships is well known. Yet they should not be solely responsible for learning about SRHRs. As Shtarkshall *et al.* (2007) point out, parents have a role in young people's 'sexual socialisation', imparting social, cultural and religious values about intimate and sexual relationships, and health education professionals should provide 'sexual education', including information about sexuality and related social skills. Despite – or perhaps because of – these diverse roles in relation to young people's sexual education, the topic is often conflictual. This includes disagreements about: the role of the government in family life and sex education; parental control of the content of sex education; core values to be included in sex education, such as gender equality and personal

responsibility; and what constitutes appropriate adolescent sexual behaviour (Shtarkshall *et al.* 2007).

In Argentina, although the Integral Sex Education law of 2006 is progressive, its implementation is incomplete as debates around it persist: while its supporters believe providing sex education from the primary level allows youth to reflect on sexuality in order to make informed choices, its detractors maintain that it incites promiscuity. Cultural and social expectations about sex, sexuality and gender norms become ingrained during childhood and adolescence (Berglas *et al.* 2014). In these processes certain topics often remain out of discussion, thus generating taboos. Argentina has been at the forefront of sexual rights in Latin America – it was the first country to legalise same-sex marriage in 2010 and approved the most progressive gender identity law in the region in 2012. As in many other countries in the region, prostitution itself (exchanging sex for money) is legal, but organised prostitution (brothels, prostitution rings, pimping) is illegal. But there are also still many taboos around sexuality.

The taboo topics in Argentina include abortion, adolescent sexuality and pregnancies, contraceptive methods and sexually diverse SRH education. Providing comprehensive information on these issues is fundamental, as it constitutes youth's human right to healthy development as established by national law. A recent study about youth sexual practices has shown that in Argentina 44 per cent of young people have their first sexual relations before the age of 16. Moreover it revealed that 34 per cent do not use any contraceptive method in their first sexual relations; over 50 per cent of youth do not know how to use condoms appropriately, and their use has decreased by 10 per cent since 2005 (Kornblit and Sustas 2015: 9–15). Thus, even if the law determines many contraceptive methods – such as condoms and contraceptive pills – should be available for free, many young people do not seem to have the knowledge to use them appropriately.

Conventional sex education in Argentina is extremely variable, tending to be focused on biomedical and reproductive issues, in disregard of matters such as sexual diversity, pleasure, gender inequalities and consent (Kornblit, Sustas and Adaszko 2013). Because the education system is decentralised, regardless of the content and materials provided by the national government, each province's Ministry of Education has the discretion to adjust its curriculum. Thus, how progressive or conservative the sex education provided is depends on the local government's views. Key opinion leaders maintain that, although the 2006 Integral Sex Education law is comprehensive and progressive, it is not being applied, and that problems persist about the quality of the information provided to young people (Dillon 2013). Regardless of variations between provinces, the national Ministry of Education considers that SRHR education in Argentine schools continues to register difficulties and resistance from teachers and directors regarding the teaching of content related to gender and sexual diversity,

challenging gender inequalities, and a lack of concern about gender-based violence (Ministerio de Educación 2015).

Sawade (2014) and Allan *et al.* (2008) have argued that it is vital to discuss taboos, regardless of controversy, as the failure to do so undermines young people's ability to know and claim their rights in relation to sex, sexuality and reproduction. While certain topics surrounding sexuality might have been taboo, young people's general access to the internet, and hence to diverse forms of SRHR information, provides a new space to engage with them.

3 Methods
This article is based on my experience of and subsequent reflections on being involved in the design and implementation of a SRHR education platform at the sub-national government level. A literature review was conducted to contextualise how the putting into practice of #ChauTabú relates to the topics discussed by scholarship, particularly the idea of 'spaces' for education, and the potentials and limitations of digital SRHR education.

4 Limitations
No new data has been collected for this article. It relies on personal experience and limited quantitative data provided by the practitioners currently in charge of the project. The article is limited to discussing the design and implementation stages of the project.

The usage data presented provides a snapshot of the site's traffic. However, although online resources create an array of opportunities for targeting youth, the limits to these platforms must be problematised and contextualised (Guse *et al.* 2012). Berglas *et al.* (2014) point out, for instance, that digital platforms have reduced opportunities for young people's critical thinking and reflection processes, thus undermining their ability to strategise and come up with solutions when faced with SRHR issues. This suggests that digital platforms have to be delivered in conjunction with other forms of support and services in order to result in behaviour change. This study does not claim to be an evaluation of #ChauTabú impact on actual behaviour change.

5 Project overview of #ChauTabú digital platform for young people's sex education
#ChauTabú is a SRHR online platform that was launched in 2013 by the Youth General Direction, a department of the Deputy Chief of Government of the City of Buenos Aires.[1] While the project arose from the recognition of young people's need for SRHR education, in producing #ChauTabú's content the opportunity to go beyond basic SRH biomedical information was seized. #ChauTabú also tackled taboos and sought to include rights-based and non-heteronormative approaches. This guided the decision to create #ChauTabú as a brand that could speak to youth about a range of different health-related issues in the future. A year after its launch, #ChauTabú was expanded to host information regarding substance abuse in an independent sub-site under the main domain.

The site was developed by the Government of the City of Buenos Aires, recognising the pressing need to offer appropriate SRHR information to young people. In addition to the national status of sex education detailed above, based on the decentralised education system, in the city of Buenos Aires' system teachers are subject to a points-based training system, with compulsory and elective training. Within this, the elective sex education training awards the least amount of points possible. This means that overworked and underpaid teachers have no incentives to be appropriately trained to comply with the 2006 Integral Sex Education law.[2] In addition, studies show that faced with a problem related to sexuality, only 7 per cent of young people would approach a teacher (Kornblit and Sustas 2015: 20).

Thus, #ChauTabú was proposed as an interim response, given the lengthy amount of time necessary to offer comprehensive education on these matters in schools (e.g. updating of teachers' training and pedagogical approval, making the sex education training compulsory for all teachers, conducting teacher training and oversight of implementation). Such a long-term project also required extensive coordination between ministries. In light of these circumstances, the team of advisers on diversity and inclusion policies working for the Deputy Chief of Government proposed an alternative online option to reach young people while these formal education policies for traditional spaces were discussed, negotiated, designed and implemented.

The objective of #ChauTabú is to be a sexual education tool that addresses taboos, by providing information not only about sex and sexuality, but also about young people's rights in order to challenge power relations and instil agency for them to determine their needs. Thus, the focus across the site is never 'what not to do', but rather 'how to safely enjoy what you want to do or are doing'.

Underlying the development of #ChauTabú is the insight that different 'places' are necessary for the provision of SRHR information, as these enable users to interact and express themselves with differing degrees of freedom. Thus, while the school and the family remain relevant spaces for SRHR education, they are also limited by sociocultural norms for and expectations of young people (Guilamo-Ramos et al. 2015; Wilson and Koo 2010). In contrast, a 'progressive sense of place' (Hemingway 2008; Massey 1993), in which taboos are addressed and cultural norms challenged, was followed in the creation of #ChauTabú as a secure, discrete online space. This space would provide information and also work as a channel of direct communication between the government and the youth. Thus, this becomes an alternative and non-exclusive space for a rights-based SRH approach, which can provide greater privacy for young users than 'traditional' spaces, such as the family, or education or public health institutions where the (un)acceptability of discussing particular topics may prevent adolescents from inquiring or accessing information about issues relevant to their own experiences or interests (Wilson and Koo 2010; Sawade 2014; Allan et al. 2008).

The privacy and anonymity that digital platforms provide also become relevant in promoting discussions on issues that may challenge social or religious norms, thus opening up space to help debunk myths and uncertainties regarding SRHR.

The sections of the #ChauTabú website include:

- Information about health and sex, with a question and answer (Q&A) format divided into thematic areas: the body and sex organs; HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections (STIs); sexuality, gender and sexual diversity; vaccinations; pregnancy and contraceptive methods; sexual and reproductive rights.

- An interactive map that provides the locality of available state-run and free youth services offices, HIV/AIDS test centres, and health centres for professional consultations and dispensing of contraceptives.

- 'It happened to me': this section provides first-person anonymised real-life experiences regarding youth encounters with diverse SRHR issues.

- Contraceptive methods: this is a responsive section in which the user chooses three methods from a list of over 20 contraceptive options. The user then gets a comparative table with information for each selected type including: type of contraceptive, description, efficiency, capacity to prevent STIs, advantages, disadvantages and availability. The user is able to change his or her selection and obtain a new comparative table as many times as necessary.

- A test: an interactive 'true or false' quiz, in which the user responds to a statement and receives further information on the subject.

- An online practice: an anonymous system through which the user can ask further questions that may not be addressed by the available information on the site. These are responded to within 72 hours by a team of health professionals.

6 Findings
6.1 Site usage and development
During its first year the site received 250,000 visits to the online practice and held over 3,000 consultations, and the site users reported being 46 per cent women and 54 per cent men. However, the gender distribution of the online practice users shows a higher disparity with 71 per cent women and 29 per cent men asking questions through this channel. Seven per cent of the online practice users were below 15 years of age, 52 per cent were aged 15–19, 27 per cent aged 20–24, 7 per cent aged 25–29, and 7 per cent were 30 or older. Most of their questions related to contraceptive methods (28 per cent), sexuality (17 per cent), pregnancy (12 per cent) and STIs (11 per cent). The site's core content does not currently address issues such as fetishes or sadomasochism, and there is no available information about whether the online practice

received questions on those topics, and if so with what frequency. The site does provide information in its Q&A section that normalises the consumption of pornography, but highlights that no one should coerce or be coerced into consuming it.

An interesting finding is that there are currently site visits coming from outside of Argentina. While national visitors account for 82 per cent of the site's traffic, Mexican users come next with 2.5 per cent, followed by 1.88 per cent from the USA and 1.63 per cent from Spain. Given the highly geographically biased parameters used by search engines in the provision of search results, this may point to a vacant space in Mexican resources providing trustworthy local SRHR information.

In December 2015, the administration responsible for designing and implementing the programme won the national presidential elections, and it has since decided to scale it up to the national level. #ChauTabú will thus migrate from sub-national jurisdiction to the Under-Secretary of Youth in the Ministry of Social Development.[3] This is an ongoing process for which the Ministry is partnering UNICEF-Argentina to review and update the content, including the new substance abuse and gender-based violence sub-sites. This scaling-up will have an impact on the site's content (e.g. the interactive map will provide information for the whole country), as well as demanding new strategies for communication based on the specifics of different regions of the country. In the next section I will describe some of the key elements of the design process.

6.2 Design considerations

The aim of the project was to provide medically accurate information about SRHR. In order to do so, the team prioritised making this information *inclusive* and *friendly* for youth (15–29 years old), the main target population. With this in mind, a combination of written and graphic communication dimensions was decided on, both as a means of creating a graphic identity for the project that the user could easily recognise and to facilitate health information dissemination. The use of *youth-friendly language* was prioritised. A Public Health Communications team was in charge of adapting the information provided by the Ministry of Health to make it friendlier for the user. The language of #ChauTabú focuses on being biomedically accurate and informative, while using everyday language, including the slang that young people use when talking to their peers. Throughout the site, the use of SRHR jargon or technical/scientific terms was avoided.

A set of illustrations was commissioned to help develop *a user-friendly interface*. These were intended to be attractive to youth, and to offer an identity that users could identify with. This allowed #ChauTabú to have a repository of images to be used for future communication, and to represent society as diverse and not homogeneous. The images were done using a bright colour palate and using unconventional colours to represent human features, such as hair and eyes. They included people as well as everyday objects and activities (from dancing to

kissing). The images are inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex (LGBTQI) couples, as well as representing different aesthetic styles adopted by the youth of Buenos Aires. The rationale for this imagery was to capture the diversity of the city, and to make users feel represented when navigating the site. The site also uses animations to create audiovisual content following the same principles of user-friendly language and inclusive visual representations. These include explanations about how to use condoms, HIV/AIDS transmission and prevention, and puberty and physical changes during adolescence.

#ChauTabú was innovative in Argentina for being a state-run SRHR platform that comprehensively *adopted a non-heteronormative rights-based approach to SRH* directed at youth. The aim of both the written and graphic content is to adopt an inclusive perspective of sex and reproduction, which considers sexuality and gender as fluid. The information provided is relevant for the SRHR of LGBTQI partners, and provides information relevant to trans youth under Q&A, such as: 'Is it wrong to feel that my biological sex does not match my gender identity?', 'Is a hormonal substitution treatment dangerous for trans people's health?' and 'If I am a trans person and I want to start hormonal substitution treatment, what should I do?' The site also sheds light on the meaning of diverse topics, such as, among many others, the difference between trans, transgender, transvestite, transsexual, intersex and intersexual; sexuality, sex and gender; gender identity and sexual identity; and sexual orientation. This content was given additional legitimacy by the review and approval of national LGBTQI organisations.

The site is not limited to SRH and emphasises *youth rights*. One of the main focuses across #ChauTabú is young people's rights regarding access to SRH services and information. This refers both to legal frameworks already in place, and to framing sex and sexuality as pleasure, stressing the importance of individual choice and positive rights based on informed decisions and responsible practices. Underlying this provision of information is the argument that sex education empowers people, allowing them to make informed decisions about their lives and bodies, whereas a lack of information impoverishes and disempowers people (Cornwall and Jolly 2006; Armas 2006) and may lead to unplanned and/or undesired outcomes.

Lastly, although a government-based project, #ChauTabú benefited from the *support and participation of several key civil society organisations.*[4] The website content was co-created with leading national HIV/AIDS, LGBT and women's rights civil society organisations, which revised a first proposal, provided feedback for its improvement and approved the final version. The presence of their logos at the bottom of the site has strengthened the legitimacy of the resource. These organisations were also encouraged to use #ChauTabú as part of their awareness-raising efforts. Nonetheless, as discussed in the next section, #ChauTabú did experience, and had to overcome, several challenges during its implementation.

6.3 Implementation challenges and proposed solutions

Several challenges arose during the implementation of the project. While the cause – and hence the solution – of these may be grounded in different context-related conditions, they may still be relevant for practitioners designing SRH interventions in other settings.

Due to its digital nature, #ChauTabú faces the inherent limitations that Berglas *et al.* (2014) point out for this type of platform, as discussed in Section 4. The interactive map on the site fulfils the function of linking this resource with other state public and free services that can deliver further support such as HIV testing, contraceptive dispense and SRHR professional services. While key complementary strategies should include progressive content in formal education spaces, meaning a proactive engagement of the state with youth SRHR, the platform addressed these limitations based on readily available resources.

A first implementation challenge relates to the information provided on the #ChauTabú site. This included initial decisions on what information to include or exclude in the first implementation and decisions about what subsequent information was needed or desired by users. Here the questions submitted by users through the online practice function proved the best resource for getting a feel for key issues not already included. Thus, practitioners included in the project's structure the periodical monitoring of the online practice to identify recurring questions, establishing a useful mechanism to track what types of information are being sought by youth. The content relating to these issues is then used to update the site's core content accordingly. Using the interests and doubts expressed by the users through their questions to the online practice to update the site's core content represents a participatory approach, in which the state can find innovative ways of acknowledging civil society's concerns in the digital era.

A second challenge refers to how to publicise #ChauTabú to ensure young people know of its availability. As the site contains innovative rights-based information, it has generated mixed reactions and has encountered resistance among its expected facilitators in education and health provision institutions. This means that education and health practitioners may choose to recommend the site or not based on their normative judgements on its content (Allotey *et al.* 2011; Meyer, Taylor and Peter 2015). Furthermore, a systematic plan to present it in schools would require considerable human and financial resources, as well as needing a long process of formal approval. Instead, in Buenos Aires, social networks were a fundamental channel of communication with users of #ChauTabú. Facebook proved most efficient, with a fan page garnering 63,800 'likes'. In order to sustain interest in a platform such as Facebook, the constant production of content is needed to keep the page active, alongside funds to cover online publicity targeting youth at district-level. There was no censorship of imagery on Facebook, presumably because the images used are drawings rather than photographs. However, the posts collected a high number of comments

by users, either asking further questions, or criticising the content displayed. Thus, the role of a moderator for the fan page should be considered, mostly to respond to inquiries that may arise through this channel of communication.

In countries with laptop distribution programmes for school-aged youth, the Ministry in charge of software updates has the power to make the site the homepage of the laptop's browser through remote updates. While this was under consideration for #ChauTabú, it has not been implemented yet. This would be the most effective method in reaching the target population in areas with high school enrolment rates.

The third challenge concerns prevailing sociocultural norms and values associated with young people's sexual behaviour. When trying to design progressive, inclusive SRHR education content, different and often confronting positions tend to arise. These are often expressed as cultural, gender or religious cleavages. In the case of Buenos Aires, the Catholic church was most opposed to #ChauTabú. It organised resistance directly through the church, and indirectly through religious civil society groups. Two online campaigns were launched to petition for the elimination of the site; however, neither reached its target of adherence set at 7,500 and 2,000 signatures (Change.org 2013; CitizenGO 2013). The church also used its weekly open-air television programme to maintain that 'while the site [#ChauTabú] believes it is informing the youth, it is actually deforming them, disorienting them by presenting different sexual experiences as if they were all equally valid, including those that go against nature' (Aguer 2014).

The Catholic church's opposition to #ChauTabú made the front page of one of the country's most widely read newspapers following the site's launch. In addition, Catholic lawyers' and doctors' professional organisations and Catholic school principals who supported the Catholic church's position reached their communities with messages characterising #ChauTabú as a 'corrupter of minors' and calling on parents to protest against the 'systematic destruction of the human persona and of all the virtues and values that remit to man's transcendence, especially of children and adolescents' (infoCatólica 2013). The government's response came from key political leaders of the administration, highlighting the good reception #ChauTabú had received among Buenos Aires' youth, based on the high number of visits and questions submitted through the online practice. The government also claimed that 'it is important for a government to address these issues, the portal is based on the principles of liberty and respect' and that 'it is worrisome to sustain that a website can incite conducts; being informed about certain things is not equivalent to inciting them' (Minuto Uno 2014).

Regardless of the caution taken to ensure that accurate medical information is provided in the design of a project such as #ChauTabú, SRHR topics inevitably generate political opposition as there are

opposing views and taboos steeped in social values, ideology, religion and morality to which Argentina is no exception (Allotey *et al.* 2011; Shtarkshall *et al.* 2007). Thus, projects of this nature, which address the contested issue of young people's SRHR education, need to be embarked on with firm conviction of the necessity of this kind of education and a clear position to be defended. This is what #ChauTabú did. It also used its alliances and the participatory involvement of civil society organisations to help it legitimise #ChauTabú in the eyes of Buenos Aires' constituencies. However, approval of the project ultimately depended on the ability of the government to transform political capital into political support and to defend a progressive approach to SRHR regardless of the political resistance experienced.

7 Discussion and conclusions
#ChauTabú appears to be filling a much-needed gap in Argentina – especially for women, who make up the vast majority of the users of its online practice – and, it seems, in other Latin American countries more broadly. Many of its users are Mexicans, who face limitations to sex education similar to those of the youth in Argentina (Amuchástegui *et al.* 2010; Amuchástegui Herrera 2001; Bárcenas Barajas 2011).

Certain aspects of the project, such as the state's support for a rights-based approach and its particular emphasis on LGBTQI issues – were possible due to a number of particular moments in politics. It started when the Buenos Aires government recognised its pressing need to update its official delivery of SRHR information to young people, and realised that following a conventional process would be highly challenging and time consuming. The alliance with the team of advisers already working on diversity and inclusion policies, the support of several key civil society organisations and the support of key political figures working in the government administration all helped to make the development of an online platform for SRHR possible. This was then further bolstered by the winning of the national presidential elections in 2015, which meant that #ChauTabú could now be extended to the national level and which ensured support from a United Nations international development partner. These conditions and alliances all helped to create an enabling context, which has pushed agendas based on progressive LGBTQI laws regarding same-sex marriage and adoption, and trans identities.

Online platforms can offer innovative and interactive ways of delivering information on sexuality. If necessary, complementary digital content can be produced on-demand based on questions to the clinics related to issues not explicitly covered on the site. This represents a hybrid approach for sociocultural contexts in which a comprehensive approach would be unlikely to win approval either at the political or societal level.

If #ChauTabú's main features – namely imagery, language, a rights-based approach and a fluid understanding of sex, sexuality and gender – were to be adopted and adapted in other countries, there is

potential for social controversy. This, which is embedded in the nature of the project, should not be seen as a weakness but as an opportunity to promote public discussion. In Buenos Aires this was evident in the public stances of powerful political actors, both for and against the project, as well as in editorials in the leading national newspapers criticising the initiative, and, of course, in the church's ongoing opposition (Román 2013; Castro 2014). Rather than being discouraged, this controversy should be embraced as it creates an opportunity to launch a public conversation about the state's role in SRHR education, which may lead to transformative policies that stem from a broader agenda. Thus, #ChauTabú and other similar initiatives should be conceived as having the potential to go beyond their immediate value as information resources and rather be seen as platforms from which to advocate for sociocultural, political and legal innovations that can advance sexual and reproductive rights (Raupp Rios 2006; Armas 2006; Cornwall and Jolly 2006).

#ChauTabú has not undergone a comprehensive impact evaluation. The data on the number of visits to the site, questions submitted through the online practice and Facebook fan page activity suggest a positive reception of the material by young people. Even if it was initially developed at the sub-national level, because of its digital nature the resource was accessed by users nationwide. This needs to be considered in the design of the main content, while other sections (such as the interactive map) remain circumscribed to reflecting the services offered by the funding district.

The project has potential for replicability in different countries, which will be mediated mainly by levels of internet access and public support to include SRHR in the political agenda. Issues regarding public health priorities, gender dynamics, and religious and cultural sensibilities should be considered when developing the content of similar platforms in diverse localities. By using audiovisual resources (e.g. illustrations, animations) the initiative could help overcome illiteracy barriers, and it has potential to debunk taboos or misconceptions. In the case of Argentina, a government platform backed up by civil society organisations has been able to provide a trustworthy online source of information. Argentina, however, has a track record of some progressive policies with regard to sexual rights, which may have helped public trust in the service. Its potential for private access provides a space that young people can consult regarding issues they may not feel comfortable discussing in public or adult-supervised spaces, or in spaces in which they may face peer scrutiny. Considering young people navigate different types of pressures about their sexual and reproductive lives that differ across communities and social spaces, this characteristic can go a long way in providing accurate medical information, shedding light on myths and promoting discussion on taboos surrounding sexuality and sexual health. Rising awareness about SRHR could lead to an empowered youth. Further research could inquire whether this better equips them to challenge power structures relating to their sexuality.

All in all, the aim of #ChauTabú was to create a platform for SRHR, which is inclusive of the human side of sexuality, by considering the pleasure as well as the uncertainty and doubts that surround the subject, especially among youth. For this, the focus across the site is never 'what not to do' but rather 'how to safely enjoy what you want to do or are doing'.

Notes

1 https://chautabu.buenosaires.gob.ar/salud/.
2 The law mandates that sex education content should be imparted across the curriculum. However, most teachers in the system are not trained to do so.
3 It should be noted that the new under-secretary at the national level is the same person that runs the programme at city level, thus no modifications should be expected with regard to the ethos that informs the project.
4 #ChaTabú depends on the support of Fundación Huesped (HIV/AIDS), Fundalam (lactancy promotion), FALGBT (Federation of LGBT organisations), and FEIM (gender thinktank).

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