

## New Paper Exposes Hidden Agenda of the Sex Ed Establishment

By Wendy Wright

NEW YORK, April 25 (C-FAM) Reporters called one program "x-rated." Another was dubbed "kindergarten sex ed." A World Health Organization version led to a spectacular defeat in the European Parliament. UN delegates reject it as an assault on their culture.

Comprehensive sexuality education often goes unchallenged – until people discover what it teaches. Now a new paper explains the politics behind the curricula and why so many people are upset.

A team of experts led by Professor Jokin de Irala found the self-described "evidence-based" comprehensive sexuality education to be riddled with ideology and opinions masquerading as facts. And outright disrespect for parents, with one program declaring sexual autonomy an "entitlement" that "strengthens the individual against intrusions by the family or society."

"The Politics of 'Comprehensive Sexuality Education'" looks at the tactics of what the authors call the Sex Education Establishment, a collection of powerful organizations such as the UN Population Fund, the World Health Organization, USAID and Planned Parenthood.

The Sex Education Establishment creates policy guidelines and funds efforts to carry them out, presenting their product as neutral "best practices." But the Establishment's recommendations fail to distinguish facts from opinion, and its track record is questionable. Terms that appear innocuous, like "gender" and "evolving capacity," disguise dubious teachings and practices.

In 2004, the journal *Lancet* published a joint statement by experts describing the ABC strategy – Abstinence, Be Faithful, and use a Condom – as the best ways for avoiding risk.

Yet the Sex Education Establishment does not "take seriously that the implementation of A or B is possible," and seldom acknowledges that sexual activity is a risk for adolescents, note the authors.

"The Sex Education Establishment tends to assume that most minors are sexually active, and their programs do very little to protect the majority of non-sexually-initiated youth," they write.

Recently, a UN Population Fund official exhibited this flawed thinking. When speaking to cadres of activists at a UN conference, Kate Gilmore was overheard more than once ridiculing the idea of abstinence.

Yet the vast majority of youth under 18 are not sexually active, report the authors. Promoting condoms as safe sex may "actually foster a false sense of security in youth and lead, paradoxically, to increased risk-taking behavior," a behavioral phenomenon known as "risk compensation."

Professor de Irala's team found abstinence-centered programs are effective, presenting facts and presuming adolescents' ability to make ideal decisions, not patronizing youth by presuming they will engage in risky sexual activity.

Sexuality education cannot be entirely evidence-based because many important concepts and terms are debatable, and get their meaning from the context they are used – such as the word "love."

The authors argue that sex education programs, especially when publicly funded, should empower parents to be the educators, and in any case should not advance an agenda that is incompatible with the values of the communities in which they are implemented.

The authors advise sex experts to seek input from – and reflect the values of – the people who know and love their children the most: parents. They are most responsible for their children's education and well-being, are sensitive to their child's evolving maturity, and should have the legal right to protect their youngsters from harmful messages.

Other studies back up the paper's conclusions, reporting that adolescent girls whose parents provide limits and supervision wait longer before having sex, regardless of socioeconomic factors like their neighborhood.

"The Politics of 'Comprehensive Sexuality Education'" is published by the International Organizations Research Group, a division of C-FAM, publisher of the Friday Fax.

