

Social Distancing MUN X



UNESCO

Countries' Obligation
to Sexual Education

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What is UNESCO?

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural committee is tasked with a variety of things. Its primary goal is [“to contribute to the building of a culture of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information”](#). UNESCO works to foster international collaboration surrounding education, science, and culture, and contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The UN primary goal for 2021 is for Creative Economy Sustainable Development and UNESCO is working to reflect that. In relation to this committee’s topic, UNESCO also work to develop educational tools, formats, and curriculum to ensure proper schooling and education for all students and all global citizens- it hopes to adopt international education standards.

Introduction to topic

Each country treats sexual education differently. The obligation to sexual education can be interpreted as different things to different people and national governments. This education can be incredibly impactful and important, in Lithuania, the implementation of stronger sexual education [reduced teen pregnancy rates by 30 %](#). The question is what is necessary and helpful and when is it an obligation. Sexual education can contain a vast range of different topics, including adolescent development and puberty, emotional relationships, personal skills, wellness, sexual behavior and health, and society and culture. Sexual health, behavior, and reproduction is usually the focus of sexual education, and this usually expands on STI/STDs, healthy sexual behavior, abstinence, anatomy, and reproductive health/rights. The goal of

sex-ed is to educate youth, especially adolescents, helps them gain information and skills to make healthy decisions later on in life.

Why is Sexual Education Important?

Although discussions about sex and all sexual issues/related topics has historically been taboo, sex-ed is important in educating future generations and helping teens make educated, safer decisions. Sexual education can help provide accurate information on STIs and STDs, pregnancy, contraception, and consent. It means that people are aware of what is happening in a situation. Sex-ed makes talking about traditionally “frowned on” topics easier, which can improve the lives of adolescents and give them better tools going forward. Lastly, school-based sexual education is important because informal methods of sharing information, such as the media or through peers, can sometimes be ineffective or incorrect.

The urgency for sexual education has also been stressed by the outbreak of HIV/AIDS, mainly in African countries with epidemic levels of the disease.

Range of Subject and Curriculum

Sexual education is taught in a multitude of ways, and schools of thought surrounding Sex Ed. are largely focused on the issues of sexual reproduction and thus abstinence.

Abstinence-only

This type of education generally encourages people to only engage in sexual intercourse for reproductive purposes in marriage. It's usually encouraged by religious leaders, specifically Christian organizations. They believe that it is impossible to have safe sex outside of marriage and the most ethical thing to do is wait. It does not teach about contraception or consent, instead pushing for the avoidance of sexual risk by omitting sex altogether. The effectiveness of abstinence only-education has been questioned, because the argument can be made that simply teaching abstinence and not giving teenagers the tools to have sex (outside or inside marriage) safely leads to more sexual health related issues among adolescents.

Abstinence Based/Abstinence "Plus" Sexual Education

This education teaches about some contraceptives and teaches about sex in the setting of marriage. It also teaches students to wait until marriage to have sex. More governments often require this in schools. They also believe the safest sex is within a marriage. Large portions of the US are examples of this model.

Reproductive Only Sexual Education

This type of education only focuses on sex in order to have children, it does teach about sex but it usually includes minimal to no discussion of contraception. [China is an example of this model.](#)

Full information/Comprehensive

This method of teaching includes all information including non-reproductive sex, safe sex, consent, and contraceptives. It gives overviews of all aspects of health-related curriculum, and is often science and research study based. This can provide good information for those in the LGBTQ+ community. Belgium has a version of this.

Conveying information

The goal of sexual education can be different for different nations and organizations. If the goal is preventing teen pregnancy then schools might be a good target demographic but if the goal is to prevent harm in sex work, adult education is important. It can also be vital in empowering (mostly) women with the information they are often deprived of which can help prevent abuse

- In-School Education
 - Schools often provide sexual education as a compulsory course for students. This usually takes place sometime between when children are 10 and 18. The goal of this type of education for younger students is usually to prevent abuse and teach about consent and what is ok and not ok. It can also be used to assuage curiosity. For older students, it is often more focused on preventing pregnancies and STIs/STDs. It often also focuses on learning more about the reproductive system and educating students about choices that are available to them to prevent pregnancy.
- Educating Adults
 - Adult education is often focused on empowerment. Many women do not have equal knowledge, especially if they were taught abstinence-only, when entering a marriage. This can lead to a power imbalance which can result in abuse. Education can help provide a framework for consent and provide everyone involved with adequate information.
- Educating Sex Workers
 - This type of education is focused on preventing STIs and STDs as well as pregnancy. It teaches about contraceptive devices and consent primarily.

It usually has the goal of ensuring safety. Another facet in these is often self-defense.

Questions to Consider

- Does my country have state-mandated sex-ed?
- How much education is appropriate?
- How useful would education outside of school be?
- What is legal in my country?
- Should there be a universal and international standardized curriculum for sexual education, and if so, how could this be implemented/what should the curriculum consist of?
- How does sexual education both cause and prevent problems for students and adolescents?
- Are there different approaches each country can take to sexual education to better suit its population?
- To what extent can sexual education prevent problems such as drug addiction or crime?
- How can sexual education be implemented into schools so that it becomes a core part of curriculum?

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