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UN Agency Under Fire for Misleading Governments and Sexualizing Children

(New York City, NY) A United Nations agency is coming under fire today for promoting the sexualization of children as young as age nine and misleading world governments about the negative impact of comprehensive sexuality education.

Among the outrages, a newly updated document published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) says that children should be instructed that abstinence means that a child can decide "when to start having sex and with whom," and it calls for children as young as nine years old to be able to "describe male and female responses to sexual stimulation." It also states that an aim of the program is to "help children and young people form respectful and healthy relationships with . . . romantic or sexual partners."

"It's unbelievable. Abstinence has always meant 'not having sex.' Now UNESCO says abstinence means children can decide when to have a sexual partner, and to help in that effort it wants kids as young as nine to be able to describe an erection or orgasm. This is way beyond simple sex education that was traditionally taught in middle school, let alone elementary school," said Sharon Slater, president of Family Watch International.

In January, UNESCO released its latest revised edition of a 2009 guidance document on sexuality education. The document has the backing of multiple United Nations agencies including UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, and World Health Organization. When it was released OutRight Action International—an organization that campaigns for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex rights—told Devex.com that it was involved in putting the new guidelines together, which calls into question the motives and objectives for this guidance.

"There is no doubt UNESCO seeks to diminish the role that parents and cultures play when it comes to sexual issues. In fact, the guidance document calls for children to differentiate between values that they hold versus the values of their parents and guardians. Family Watch finds that deeply disturbing. I think most parents would too," Slater said.

In addition to concerns about undermining family relationships, Slater said her organization is especially concerned that UNESCO is misleading governments around the world about the effectiveness and impacts of comprehensive sexuality education (CSE).

"CSE is much different than simple sex education. Comprehensive sexuality education programs seek to change societies by changing sexual and gender norms and have an almost obsessive focus on teaching children they have a right to sexual pleasure," Slater said.

"Last year we tasked researchers with looking at peer-reviewed studies to examine the hard data. They examined 60 of the best studies covering 40 different comprehensive sex education programs used in U.S. public school classrooms. Even we were shocked by the results."

Among the findings of academic peer-reviewed studies on comprehensive sexuality education:

- ❑ No study demonstrated that school-based CSE programs reduces teen pregnancy rates. One study found that comprehensive sexuality education actually increased pregnancy rates.
- ❑ None of the school-based CSE programs showed effectiveness at increasing consistent condom use by teens. (Consistent use is necessary to provide meaningful protection from STDs.)
- ❑ None of the school-based programs showed success at achieving the purported dual benefit of the "comprehensive" strategy—increasing both teen abstinence and condom use within the same teen population.
- ❑ Five of the 40 school-based CSE programs evaluated by the studies produced significant negative effects, such as increases in sexual initiation, recent sex, oral sex, or pregnancy for the target population or a substantial subgroup of teens.

"The UNESCO document falsely claims that abstinence-only programs have 'been found to be ineffective and potentially harmful.' Yet that's not what the data show. The inverse is true—it is comprehensive sexuality education that poses the greater risk, and we have the data to show it," Slater said.

Established by a vote of international leaders in London in 1945 and now based in Paris, UNESCO is a specialized agency of the United Nations whose declared purpose is to contribute to peace and security by promoting international collaboration through educational, scientific, and cultural reforms.

In October the Trump administration announced that the United States will withdraw from UNESCO at the end of 2018. At the time of the announcement the U.S. State Department cited "the need for fundamental reform in the organization."

"[Our analysis of UNESCO's](#) new guidance on CSE underscores the 'cultural reforms' they have in mind including encouraging abortion and promoting the sexualization of children beginning at a young age.' It's no wonder the Trump administration took action," Slater said.

The organization Slater leads, Family Watch International, was founded in the United States in 1999 and is a nonprofit international educational organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

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Read the Family Watch analysis here:

https://www.comprehensivesexualityeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/UNESCO_2018_CSE_Execrpts-1.pdf

The full UNESCO document is located at:

<http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2018/international-technical-guidance-on-sexuality-education>

Go to WarOnChildren.org to learn more about the comprehensive sexuality education agenda and how CSE programs are harming children around the world.

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