



University of Utah

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH JOURNAL

**SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH EDUCATION ACROSS CULTURAL
CONTEXTS: GLOBAL, NATIONAL, AND LOCAL PRACTICES AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Noelle Huhn, Dr. Claudia Geist
Department of International Studies**

Education on sexual and reproductive health has not kept up with societal transitions and adolescents are at increased risk for adopting consequential behaviors regarding their sexual health. In many contexts, sexual education is based on the foundation of abstinence-only education, severely limiting students' access to information about their reproductive health. Other countries practice abstinence-plus education which includes discussion of contraception, but this curriculum also leaves out necessary information for developing adolescents on preventing pregnancy while being sexually active as well as emphasizing the need for consent in healthy interpersonal relationships. These contexts may burden adolescents with doubt and stress regarding their reproductive health when they reach an age of increased maturity or have sexual experiences without this information.

Based on a review of 5 case studies, I will develop a framework to provide better sexual and reproductive education to adolescents. This framework seeks to be applicable across the globe, while also taking into consideration cultural and societal norms unique to each country or state and specific government and community-based programs. Examples to adapt educational programs to cultural context include restricted program access to girls and women, gender-separated discussions of reproductive topics in school, and disproportionately distributed information to minority groups.

Comprehensive sexuality education is a rising phrase in political and educational spheres, however, its programs will present differently depending on the region or culture it is implemented in. Achieving worldwide comprehensive sexuality education requires "comprehension" of the world view of specific communities and cultural and societal norms. This project will analyze and compare global structures of sexual and reproductive education, specifically programs in the Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States (West Virginia and Utah), and India. The programs and their host countries will be compared by incidence of STIs, rates of teen pregnancy, and other criteria. The project will also provide recommendations for a global, inclusive reproductive education framework for adolescents. This framework will account for local religious and moral values without sacrificing essential knowledge of sexual health.