Sex Education in the City

Supplying informational pamphlets with condoms to combat unplanned parenthood, overpopulation, and poverty in the Philippines

Tag Words: Sexual Education; the Philippines; Church vs. State; Overpopulation

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Summary

Because of the beliefs of the Catholic Church, sex education is hindered and looked down upon in the Philippines. As a result, this causes many teenagers and sexually active individuals to be unaware of basic knowledge that can protect them from the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases and unplanned parenthood. In addition, this lack of sex education causes serious problems in the economy and housing industry because of overpopulation. In many situations, children wander aimlessly without parents in poverty stricken areas. The church’s disapproval of sex education in schools leaves many students curious and unaware of the consequences of unprotected sex. In the end, this can only lead to a cascade of events which leaves the country with more problems. If better access to sex education were to be made available in the Philippines, it will help minimize a number of unfavorable outcomes, such as those mentioned above. Individuals would be able to make better decisions that can lead to a more stable country where the high birth rates and rampant poverty can be more controlled. (JK)

Youtube link: http://youtu.be/lC_y2ZqjXPE

Introduction: The Lack of Sexual Education in the Philippines

(JV) The Philippines is a poverty stricken country with many problems such as corruption in the government, overpopulation and poor economic policies. Sex education is intervened mostly by conservatives and church leaders. Their main reasoning is that sex education promotes promiscuity amongst children and it deviates from the proper values intended for the children. Basically, the church is against the teachings of sex education in schools. They believe it should only be taught at home and not in a public setting. The church is the biggest opposition to sex education (backed by the United Nations) who believes this will give enlightenment to students which can protect those from HIV, sexually transmitted diseases, and unwanted pregnancies. It is also stated that another goal is to curb the population growth factor by over 2% by providing these services along with paid contraceptives by the state. Topics to be covered by the sex education program included the male and female reproduction system, hygiene, pre-marital sex,
teenage pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases. The goal of the program is not intended to promote promiscuity, but rather it is to be an informative science based education integrated with other science classes.

1. **Sex Education is...**

Basically, sex education is a way of informing individuals about the beliefs about sex, sexual identity, relationships, and intimacy. It is believed that young people have the right to be educated on this topic. It can help in these individuals to be more understanding and aware of the effects of sex. Included associated risks of unsafe sex can be taught for example, abuse, exploitation, unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV, and AIDS. It helps to inform these young individuals so that they can arm themselves with knowledge and be better prepared.

1.1 **The Goals of Sex Education:**

1. Reduce the risks of negative results associated with unsafe sex
   
a. Sexually transmitted diseases, HIV, AIDS
   
b. Abuse
   
c. Addiction
   
d. Unplanned pregnancies

2. Contribute to young individual’s sexuality in a positive way

3. Enhance the quality of their relationships

4. Enhance their ability to make informed decisions

1.2 **Skills Developed Through Sex Education**

For sex education to be effective, it has to inform, enlighten, and offer opportunities for the individual. Although teaching someone the information is a start, it is most successful when the individual can apply what they have learned. The skills to be acquired from sex education are to be generalized life-skills that can be carried through out.

1.3 **Information Given**

Knowledge is power: with this in mind, young individuals can use this information to make better life decisions for themselves and for others. Through sex education, they can be better informed of sexual development and reproduction by understanding the physical and emotional changes involved with puberty and intimacy. They will learn about the different types of contraceptives that will help prevent unwanted pregnancies and STDs. Also, about
relationships and the different types involved. Knowledge about love, commitment, marriage, partnership, sexual diversity, religion, and the law associated with relationships.

2. Role of the Catholic Church and Intervention in Government

To anyone who lives in the United States, the idea of large church influence in government may seem foreign. However, there are cases all over the world where church influence has an impact on the average persons’ life. One such example is the current Church/State relationship in the Philippines. Even though the country’s Constitution has outlined a separation of church and state, this is hardly the case.

First off, in the same part of the Philippines’ Constitution that prohibits church/state interaction, there is an amendment stating abortion is illegal. Ironically, this is believed to have been added due to influence by the Catholic Church, who does not believe in abortions.

Another glaring example is that, as per the Constitution of the Philippines, a church official cannot endorse a political candidate. The church is not supposed to influence politics or interfere with government at all. However, it seems that this law is completely ignored, because as recently as 2005, the Catholic Bishops Conference has openly endorsed Presidential candidates. Even more than simple endorsements, the Catholic Church have also supported politicians amid scandal. This includes then President Arroyo, who was immersed in scandal surrounding her Presidency (Cline, 2005). Unfortunately, this is not a new trend and has been going on for almost 30 years. This church entanglement in government shows no sign of stopping either, as evident by the testimony of Dr. Asiri Abubakar, a professor from the Diliman Asia Centre at the University of Philippines on church and political scandals. She claims that the primary problem is that the Catholic Church should not be involved in politics at all, but are. They interfere in government affairs and she says that the separation of church and state is all but a myth there. All politicians there, especially since 1986, have constantly sought the endorsement of the church, but some of them have made the church regret their decision to back them. This includes embarrassing the church, in the sense that the church is not supposed to support politicians, let alone corrupt ones. Even with all this blatant church involvement since they started to intervene in 1986, the situation of non-separation of church and state has remained the same (Cline, 2005).

From this first-hand account of the situation, it is clear the church/state separation of the Philippines is non-existent. Aside from the fact that the church interferes in government, there has been no effort at establishing laws that punish this more strictly. Since there is currently so much government corruption in the country, churches that align themselves with corrupt politicians are themselves seen as corrupt or deceiving.

2.1 Catholic Church Intervention in Personal Life

The Catholic Church intervention does not stop at the government level. They also intrude in the lives of the common Philippine citizen in everyday affairs. Children have to pray at the beginning of each school day, government television shows prayer services at 3 p.m. each day, and Catholic shrines can be found in many government buildings. These are only a few examples of how people are exposed to Church ideology each day through the government
Church influence in this regard is probably most dominant when it comes to limiting the peoples’ knowledge of sexual education. Whether it is blocking government attempts to distribute contraceptives or taking legal action to stop sex education classes in school, the lack of sexual information available to the people have severely negative effects on the country as a whole. Whether it is high birth rate or the poverty due to large family size, without sexual education or access to contraceptives, the situation will not improve in the foreseeable future (Cline, 2003).

2.2 Church Attempts at Blocking Sex Education Classes in School

As recent as 2010, the “sexual education” of the Philippines was limited to the anatomy of the reproductive system and pregnancy and birth. There is no teaching about reproduction or even male/female relationships. This is predominantly due to vehement disapproval by the conservative Catholic Church. In 2010, when this limited version of sex education was introduced, the local bishop prompted church goers and organizations to take to the streets in protest. The bishop also rallied Catholics to protest against the government’s plan to distribute condoms and introduce more in depth sex education in schools. The Sorsogon Bishop Arturo Bastes was quoted as saying, “This is destroying our country. We have the right to protest. Let’s take to the streets,” in regard to the plans for sex education in schools (cathnews, 2010).

Not only is abortion illegal in the country, but the Church is staunchly against both the use of contraceptives and the teaching of sexual education in any form in schools. The Church has said that it will not waiver on the condom issue (being distributed in schools) and that the teaching of sex education will only increase sexual promiscuity among teens in the Philippines (Gutierrez, 2010).

Archbishop Oscar Cruz, who is the former head of the Catholic Bishops Conference, has said that he is against sex education in any form because of its moral entanglements and is better left to be discussed by the parents of the students (cathnews, 2010). He continued to say that if the government wants such sex education programs to teach the students, they should distribute the information to the parents instead and let them decide what to tell their children.

The problem with this is that this is not the culture of the Philippines. In general, parents do not talk to their children much about sexual education, so they aren’t getting the information anywhere currently (CDC, 2006). Still, many churches uphold the belief that children should get their sex education at home. Most Catholic institutions cite “unintended consequences” if sex ed is taught in school. For example, the Catholic Bishop Conference spokesman Monsignor Pedro Quiotorio has said that because of the fragile nature of children, the department of education should not teach them things that they could easily imitate the next day (referring to sexual activities) (BBC, 2010). The Monsignor went on to say that he doesn’t believe that high birth rate is the reason for the country’s problems. However, the United Nations has said that, in fact, one of the main causes of poverty is due to the high birth rate.

Over 80% of the country identifies itself as Catholic and it is clear that there is a religious influence and moral code integrated into the politics and laws of the Philippines. Many
conservative political parties such as Ang Kapatiran (The Brotherhood) have strong Catholic roots and crusade in government on behalf of the church. Head of that political party, Eric Manalang, says that sex education is not the answer to the population and poverty problems of the Philippines. He thinks that the teaching will promotes promiscuity among children and that it does not promote the proper values that are deemed necessary for children to receive in schools. As is the feeling of most Church officials, he continues to say that the matter of sexual education should strictly remain a family issue. It is clear that this message directly reflects those of the Catholic Church as stated before. It begs the question of whether or not the political motives behind this are what are best for the country, or just what the Church believes is best (cathnews, 2010).

2.3 Protests and Lawsuits by Conservative Church Groups

The Churches opposition to sexual education is not limited to just vocal disapproval. At one protest against sex education in schools in March of 2010, drew over 3,000 people and was led by the Knights of Columbus, a local Catholic group. In addition, bishops have been successful in blocking legal recourse dealing with sexual education. One instance has to do with the bishops blocking a proposed law by the parliament of the Philippines to allow easier access to state funded contraceptives (BBC, 2010).

Lawmakers have tried to work with the church by making several concessions and altering its original sex education plan. This includes not mentioning abortion or contraceptives in any of the proposed school sex education classes. However, this still does not satisfy the Catholic Church who wants sex education classes in school to be dropped all together. It is obvious the church is not willing to negotiate on the matter. It seems the Catholic Church in the Philippines sees only two outcomes: either there is no sexual education in schools at all or they will take legal action against the State.

The local and state government of the Philippines isn’t the only establishment the Catholic Church has gone after in regards to sexual education. On several occasions, church organizations have butted heads with the United Nations itself. Just a year ago in 2010, the United Nations launched a sexual education campaign in all public schools in the Philippines. The goals of the program are simple; it strives to limit HIV and AIDS, promote safe sex, and prevent unwanted pregnancies since abortion there is illegal (Gutierrez, 2010). As one can imagine, the Catholic Church does not approve of this measure and have attempted to sue the program directors to stop the program. Thus far, the Philippine state-department has staunchly backed the program and UN decision. They say their only goal in the matter is to slow the overpopulation problems. The Church claims that the UN cannot intervene in a country’s internal affairs on such a matter. At the moment, the UN sex education program is at an experimental level and is seeing protest and resistance from many conservative church groups (Gutierrez, 2010).

In reality, this Church vs. State infighting isn’t helping anyone and is making the situation worse. Although many efforts of implementing sexual education classes have been made by the government, the church opposition to them has left the efforts in vain. It’s as if no effort at solving the sexual education problem is being made since the Catholic Church consistently
blocks any advances through protests or legal action. That is why it is imperative that the people of the Philippines are given a choice in the matter. By providing them even a small form of sexual education through a sex ed pamphlet, it is still something that can set sexual education on the right track. At the current rate, the Church and State strained relationship on the issue will lead to worsening living conditions for everyone, especially large families.

3.1 Overpopulation Problems

Overpopulation is a main issue affecting the Philippines. As of July 2011, the population there is about 102 million people with a growth rate of about 2%. The large city of Manila alone has about 20 million people living there and problems of overpopulation are definitely an issue just in that one city. One article describes how many of the poor in the Philippines have to make do with whatever they are given, even if it is just a small piece of land, whether it be under a bridge, cemeteries, or even right next to railway lines. Many need to live so close together that they are practically touching because there just is not enough room (“Manila: A megacity where the living must share with the dead”). The fact that those are places in while thousands of people are staying is a major problem. There simply are not enough housing and residents can not even afford housing. There are too many people living in this country, particularly in this one city. There are many factors contributing to the overpopulation problem in the Philippines. One of them is the lack of sexual education. For 30 years the Philippine Family Planning Program has tried controlling the country’s population growth but has not had much success (Mello et al., 384). Families over here are not getting the right kind of help they need. Because of this, it is leading to many problems facing the country.

3.2 Poverty in the Philippines

Overpopulation in the country is also a leading cause of major poverty in the Philippines. Adam Easton discusses the extravagant numbers of the poor and how so many children die each year because they can not get enough food to keep them alive. He says 74 million are malnourished, including 38 million children aged 1–5 years, and 11,500 children are dying each year. These numbers are alarmingly high and will problem only get worse if nothing changes. There are many causes that lead to poverty. Some of these causes are macroeconomic issues, unemployment issues, unchecked population growth, problems in the agriculture sector, governance concerns, armed conflict, and disability (“Poverty in the Philippines: Income, Assets and Access”). In particular we will look at unchecked population growth and how many women in the Philippines are not able to get access to family planning services.. There are not enough resources to compensate for the amount of people living there. There have been surveys done to show how such little access so many people have to family planning services, ways of getting contraception methods, and how there are so many more births than wanted (“Poverty in the Philippines: Income, Assets and Access 96-97”). There needs to be more resources available to poor families so that they can get the help and information they need.

3.3 Lack of Public Health Care

The role of health care does not do much to help the problem of overpopulation in the Philippines. There is a very high fertility rate due to the lack of people using modern-method contraception
The people of the Philippines are not getting the adequate public health care that they need. They are not getting enough information about family planning options and accessibility to affordable contraceptives. People need to be more educated and knowledgeable about how to practice safer sex so that so that so many unwanted babies won’t be born. There are so many women that have had at least 10 pregnancies by the time they are 35 years old because of the lack of knowledge about contraception. To make matters worse, the government is intervening. Along with the help of the United States Agency for International Development, they are trying to get rid of donations for contraceptive methods. This makes it even harder for people to get protect themselves and prevent pregnancies and diseases because it is already hard for them to do that (Mello et al., 385). Below is a figure depicting how laws, regulations and policies can affect other public health outcomes.

A study was done by Mello et al. to look at different laws about family planning services including insurance coverage, family planning education and reasons for family planning (387). Here is a list of the results about laws and regulations that could affect family planning:

Regulations pertaining to health care providers
- Regulations for the approval, importation, dispensing and advertising of drug products
- National insurance-coverage rules
- Ordinances prohibiting distribution of certain contraceptive methods
- Laws encouraging couples to receive family planning counseling or supporting their right to practice family planning
- General laws such as tax statutes and government procurement rules (Mello et al., 388).

These regulations all contribute to the poor knowledge of the people.

Also, in 2000 there was an executive order which discourages modern methods of contraception in Manila. has gravely affected the human and reproductive rights of women. Executive Order 003,
which promotes the use of "natural family planning methods" over "artificial" ones, has shut down family planning clinics and all but stopped the distribution of contraceptives (Planned Parenthood).

3.4 Planned Parenthood

The Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) is one of the main companies that is trying to help the lack of sexual education in the Philippines. It has peer education programs which will help younger adults learn ways to prevent pregnancies and STDs like Reproductive Health Program for Street Children and You! LEAD. According to PPFA, there are about 473,000 abortions each year and most of them illegal, causing harm and health programs to so many of those women. Although abortion is illegal, thousands of women are still trying to have them done because they are not ready to have children and were not planning on having children. The lack of sexual education is extreme in the Philippines. If more things do not take place to help this issue, these numbers will only get worse.

Service Project: Distribution of Sex Education Pamphlets with Condoms at the Planned Parenthood Branch in the Philippines (JK/CD)

4.1 A Chance to Offer Help

From the first part of this in depth analysis of the problem of the lack of sexual education in the Philippines, it is obvious that the country is in need of outside help. This is where our service project came in. Since we are students from Rutgers University in New Jersey, it is hard for us to directly influence or distribute information in the Philippines itself. For this reason, we decided to work together with a local branch of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) located in New York City. They have had branches of their organization and volunteer members in the Philippines since 1971 (Planned Parenthood).

Initially, we were thinking of making some sort of education video to send to Planned Parenthood, but realized that this route would only be beneficial to those who actually viewed the video. It was not something that could be distributed to the thousands or tens of thousands of people in need in the Philippines. This is why after talking with contacts at PPFA, we decided to make sexual education pamphlets. This way, they could be distributed to the masses, be simple to understand, and ultimately offer the sexual education to the young adults of the country who couldn’t access it before. To take this one step further, we also decided to attach a condom to the back of each of the pamphlets since aside from the sexual education itself, people have a hard time getting contraceptives.

4.2 Working with Trojan and PPFA

Once the idea was conceived, we sought to get a donation of condoms from Trojan to attach to our sex education pamphlets. Since we did not know the exact number of condoms/pamphlets we would be using, we asked for a donation of 300 condoms in order to accomplish our goal. To do this, we went to the parent company of Trojan, Church & Dwight Co, Inc, located in North Brunswick. In person, we brought them the letter shown below (Appendix I) and explained our
situation to them. After a week, we were able to get a donation of 100 condoms from Church and Dwight. We attached these to the back of our sexual education. NOTE: the sexual education pamphlet is attached to the back of this classpedia. It provides information on the different types of sexually transmitted diseases and the power of the contraceptives and how they are to be used. It also provides contact information for the PPFA in case the recipient wants to learn more about sexual education and safe sex.

Once the 100 pamphlets with attached condoms were assembled, we delivered them to the Planned Parenthood Federation of America headquarters in New York City. Although they have already made pamphlets, they thought that since ours was made by college age students, it may be more effective in educating the youth of the Philippines on sexual education and safe sex practices. The PPFA offered to pay for shipping of the pamphlets and they took care of sending them to the Philippines. They said that they would be delivered to PPFA volunteers and workers in the Philippine branches of the organization, included the main branch located in Manila. There, they have reproductive health care and sexual education classes aimed at young people, mainly teenagers. This is where our pamphlets were sent and where they can best be used.

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**Appendix I**

**Donation request Letter to Trojan (Church and Dwight Co.)**

Church & Dwight Co, Inc.

Human Resources

North Brunswick, NJ

Dear Sir or Madame,

I am a senior at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey and am currently enrolled in a class with the aim of giving back to the community. Along with two other students, our goal is to create a community service project that addresses urgent problems facing not just people here in America, but the underprivileged around the world. We are also working with our course advisor, Dr. Julie Fagan.
Currently, there is a devastating overpopulation problem facing the Philippines. Coupled with the poor economy of the country, people there have barely enough money to feed their families. The average family size is approximately six while the average income of these same families can barely support three people in the same household. With abortion illegal in the country, women are faced with difficult and potentially life threatening decisions once they become pregnant. The root cause of this problem lies with the lack of sexual education and protection available to the citizens of the Philippines.

For this reason, it is our goal to enlighten the people of the Philippines by spreading sexual awareness and making contraceptives more available to the public. Along with the Planned Parenthood organization in the Philippines, we plan to create and distribute an informative sexual education pamphlet that comes with a contraceptive. Albeit it may seem simple, this gesture will prevent the aforementioned problems in the future and be a great stepping stone for future sexual education practices.

This is where your company comes in. With your vast success over the years, we are writing to you today to ask for a donation of contraceptives to be distributed with our sexual education pamphlets. It is vital these people get the education they need to make informed decisions about their future and their family and we do not have the resources to do it alone. A donation of contraceptives for this cause would be a great gesture to the community and generate positive publicity for your company.

It is important that action is taken now before the problem becomes any worse. The current state of the country neither allows people to access contraceptives, nor sexual education easily. With your help, we can grant the people of the Philippines something they have lacked for decades; a chance at an informed and safe sexual education plan.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Julie Fagan at 84 Lipman Drive New Brunswick, NJ 08903 at telephone number 848-932-8354 or email at Fagan@rci.rutgers.edu.

Thank you for your time,

Jason Krychiw, Chloe deGuzman and Justin Victorino

Letters to the Editor

Information of safe sex practices is essential knowledge for all people. Without it, people are not educated enough to make practical decisions. This leads to consequences such as sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies. In particular, the lack of sexual education in the Philippines is a large issue. The Philippines is very overpopulated with many unwanted pregnancies. One reason for the lack of sexual education is the large religious influence in the country. Over 80% of the population are Catholics, making issues such as abortions illegal. This forces many women to have babies when they probably do not want
to. The very conservative Catholic church is highly against the use of contraceptives and teaching sexual education in schools. Teens especially need to be educated because their decisions can greatly affect their future. Many think teaching sexual education promotes promiscuity. Informing people gives more knowledge, leading to better decision making. To worsen the situation is the lack of public health care. People are not getting the information they need and enough access to affordable contraceptives. Although more sexual awareness and available contraceptives will not solve problems of the Philippines, they are a great start to bettering the future of the country.

(JV)

The Daily Targum
126 College Ave., Suite 431
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

To the Editor:
Extreme poverty and poor living conditions are very common throughout the Philippines. The causes of these problems are due to corruption in the government, overpopulation, and more. My aunt who has lived in the Philippines for over 40 years told me the other day that it is not uncommon to see wandering homeless children in the streets. They are without food, water, and clothes.
I have another aunt who told me that there are mothers who beg to have travelers take their babies away simply because they cannot provide for them. She also said that she has been in houses where there are about 15 to 20 children all crammed into one apartment sharing two rooms and usually, these houses do not provide running water, heat, and electricity. We are sending pamphlets based on sex education as a service project as students from Rutgers University. Our goal is simple: provide basic information on sex education to help reduce the number of unplanned/unwanted pregnancies. We are hoping that the information we are sending them will enlighten those who read it to help them make better decisions.

Justin Victorino
Rutgers University Student
Edison, New Jersey

(JK)

Lack of Sex Education is Root Cause of Overpopulation Problems in the Philippines
Trenton Times

The Philippines is one of the poorest countries in Asia and their economy continues to suffer because of the overpopulation and its associated problems. This rapid population explosion that has occurred over the past couple decades can be attributed to the fact that the country has a poor commitment to teaching sex education to youths.
The government as well as private schools have tried to implement some form of sex education several times, but have constantly been combatted by conservative Catholic groups. In a country where over 80% of the population identifies itself as Catholic, this is no surprise. The Catholic Church is against the use of contraceptives and feels teaching sex education to youths will only promote promiscuity. This has caused church groups to go as far as suing public schools for
attempting to have sex education classes. The fact is, this denial of sex education to youths of the Philippines has not helped the population boom over the past years. This is why there needs to be some form of sex education available to the people of the country. Although there is a branch of Planned Parenthood there, because of the aforementioned reasons, it is not nearly as well equipped as it should be. This is a call the raise awareness on the part of Americans to do our part to aid in a solution to this problem. A simple donation to your local Planned Parenthood could go a long way in helping the branch located in the Philippines to inform the youth of the country to truth about safe sex and sex education as a whole.
---Jason Krychiw,
Union