



A Common Border, A Shared Goal

Lessons and Inspiration
from MEXICO for
Advancing Sexual
and Reproductive
Health and Rights

A Common Border, A Shared Goal

Lessons and Inspiration
from MEXICO for
Advancing Sexual
and Reproductive
Health and Rights

by **William A. Smith**

This publication would not have been possible without the great work of our many Mexican colleagues who are part of an extraordinary coalition in the country, Demysex (*Democracia y Sexualidad*). These advocates from nearly every state in the country and the Federal District have created a network to help defend sexuality information, education, and policy. It has been our great pleasure to work with all of them over the years. In particular, we would like to thank the advocates from Demysex member *Grupo Diversidad Sexual* in Guadalajara and *AQUESEX (Asociación Querétana de Sexualidad)* in Querétaro, who invited us to their beautiful cities to work together to advocate for and defend human rights. In particular, the spirit and life of slain activist, Octavio Acuña of Querétaro, informs and inspires our work in Mexico in more ways than words can communicate.

Three additional people must be singled out for their extraordinary willingness to work closely with SIECUS on the ground in Mexico. First, Gabriela Rodríguez of *Afluentes* was one of our key partners early on in this work and we thank her for carrying the banner of feminism and political acumen. SIECUS Board Member and sexuality educator extraordinaire, Esther Corona, helped initiate this work and continues to skillfully guide our efforts. José (Pepe) Aguilar, National Coordinator of Demysex, is one of the most dedicated and hard working advocates for healthy sexuality and we look forward to many more years of collaboration.

Jorge Saavedra López and Héctor Escamilla, both of the country's National Center on HIV/AIDS, were also supportive and we are thankful for their leadership. Thanks also to Ana Luisa Ligouri and Sharon Bissell Sotelo of the MacArthur Foundation's Mexico Office for their guidance and love of the work.

A number of former and current SIECUS colleagues contributed to our project in Mexico. Thanks to Surbhi Kapadia, Smita Pamar, Monica Rodríguez, and Adrienne Verrilli who contributed so much programmatically and to Vanessa Brocato, Martha Kempner, and Jason Osher for their assistance in preparing this publication.

Finally, thanks to The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation for their ongoing support of the SIECUS–Demysex collaboration.

William A. Smith
Vice President for Public Policy

Joseph DiNorcia, Jr.
President and CEO

IN 2002, SIECUS BEGAN WHAT WOULD BE A LONG AND PRODUCTIVE COLLABORATIVE relationship to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights in Mexico. From the cacophony of Mexico City’s 28 million citizens to small remote villages to historic colonial cities, we have worked with many colleagues over the past four years. This publication documents that collaboration which remains a labor of love and can hopefully serve as a model for others who are seeking to make a difference across borders in order to advance shared goals.

Understanding the Context: The Politics and History of Mexico as the Backdrop

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, there is no question that democratic ideals—particularly principles of openness and the broader participation of citizens—have taken hold in nearly every part of the globe. At its worst, this new global milieu manifests itself as crass, unprincipled, and immoral capitalism that disregards standards of human dignity and eschews universally accepted human rights. This same shift, however, has also given way to an awakening about the role of citizenship in

countries where the term had previously meant little to nothing. People once standing outside the political processes of dictatorships or corrupt regimes, are now no longer just relying on a regime to deliver them up or taking to the streets to fight for their rights. They are within the system as well, officially part of their own government's efforts to secure a better life for its citizens, including ensuring sexual and reproductive health.

Mexico is a country in such a position. While Mexico managed to exist in relative political distance from the Cold War, its own form of dictatorship set in and persisted for the better part of seven decades. During this period, one political party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*) or PRI, controlled nearly every function of Mexican government and elections were pro forma, leaving generations of Mexicans disenfranchised and unable to participate in their own government.

In July 2000, Mexico's citizens joined the growing global chorus demanding that governments extend from the people themselves. They echoed a new understanding that governments should not create themselves to control citizens but instead citizens need to create government. In a truly historic election, Mexico's citizens sent the PRI packing from the presidency and instead elected Vicente Fox, a member of the National Action Party (*Partido Acción Nacional*) or PAN, opening up a new era of democracy for Mexico's 100 million-plus citizens. This new freedom is still unfolding and much remains uncertain.

The status of sexual and reproductive health and rights in Mexico today can only be understood within this historical and political context. Too often, as advocates, we neglect (or reject) the political-historical context and we do so at our own peril.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

In truth, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) fared relatively well under the PRI, particularly in the later years. Beginning in the 1970's, Mexico drafted and implemented a progressive family planning policy. Comprehensive sexuality education was slow in coming, but national reforms introduced in 1993 made it, at least on paper, nearly universal in the country's primary and secondary schools. Training of teachers lagged behind the availability of textbooks and other materials, but Mexico is far from unique in this regard.

A Portrait of Mexico in Numbers

Total Population Size (in thousands, year 2005)	107,029
	Female: 54,722
	Male: 52,308¹
GNI per capita (US\$, 2005)	\$8,970²
Life expectancy at birth (2000–2005)	73.4³
Illiteracy rate, adults ages 15 years and above (2000)	8.8%⁴
Health expenditures per capita (US\$, 2000)	\$311
People ages 15–49 living with HIV/AIDS (2006)	180,000 [97,000 low estimate–440,000 high estimate]⁵
Percentage of adults ages 15–49 living with HIV/AIDS (2003)	0.3%^{6,7}
Women's average age at first marriage (2005)	20.6⁸
Females ages 15–19 who have ever been married (2006)	17%⁹
Percentage of couples using condoms for family planning (2003)	3.7%¹⁰

The PRI was also relatively well regarded in keeping Mexico's political life free of the anti-sexuality tenets of the Catholic Church. The vast majority of Mexican people identify as Catholic, and Mexico's own Virgin of Guadalupe is a near universally

recognized symbol that testifies to the country's close ties to the Roman Catholic Church. However, the Mexican people fought since the late 19th century for the establishment of a secular state and for a minimal role for the Church in the country's public life. Mexico's revolution in the early 20th century and the subsequent 1917 Constitution perpetuated such a strict separation between church and state that it makes the current U.S. environment under the Bush Administration resemble a full blown theocracy. Thus, the Vatican's opposition to key elements of SRHR, such as providing contraception and comprehensive sexuality education, were not broadly part of modern Mexico's experience on the purely political side. Though of course, Church teachings continued to influence people's private lives and behaviors. As one colleague explained, "Mexicans accept that the Church is the Church and the State is the State, and that is it."

In the mid-1990s, under the PRI, Mexico shifted its national reproductive health plans away from a population control model to a more rights-based approach as a result of the influence of in-country advocates and the new global environment for SRHR. Following the landmark global consensus on a Programme of Action at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994, Mexico was the second country in the world to adapt national level strategies to the Programme of Action and the first to do so in Latin America. This meant a much deeper focus on human rights, gender equity, health, and overall development in reproductive health policies.

On the issue of sexuality education, in particular, the Programme of Action states "information and services should be made available to adolescents to help them understand their sexuality and protect themselves from unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, and subsequent infertility. This should be combined with the education of young men to respect women's self-determination and to share responsibility with women in matters of sexuality and reproduction."¹¹ Mexico moved in this direction and government and civil society partnered to create national health text books that addressed these elements. On the service side, Mexico created a network of adolescent-friendly centers associated with clinics.

SIECUS' Vice President for Public Policy, William Smith, and SIECUS Board member, Esther Corona with youth and clinical staff outside a health center in a small village in the state of Puebla.



Yet, under the PRI, there was unequal progress on other components of SRHR. Traditional machismo norms were given free reign against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) individuals who were officially non-existent. Their gathering places were frequently raided and shuttered. This led to a level of stigma and discrimination that alienated many and fueled HIV/AIDS transmission in the country among men who have sex with men.

Mexico's abortion laws remain an obstacle to SRHR as abortion is generally illegal in most of the country, though state laws provide for exceptions in various cases such as incest, rape, and to save the life of the woman. Compounding the problem is a general lack of reliable data—and very little will to collect it among the authorities—on the number of legal abortions performed in the country or estimates of the many unsafe procedures performed in violation of the law. Having larger families also continues to be valued and, while contraception is increasingly made available, women 15–49 living in urban areas still have an average of 2.3 children and women in rural areas have 3.5.¹²

NEW FREEDOM, NEW CHALLENGES

While the 2000 election signaled a new and exciting era in Mexican politics, it brought additional challenges to SRHR. The very same changes that overturned the 71-year rule of the PRI brought a more socially conservative—and vocally Catholic—president into office. While leaving much of the official public health infrastructure outside of political and ideological pressures, President Fox has been far from a champion on SRHR. In fact, his wife is a prominent advocate for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs and Fox himself has given support to those elements within Mexico and elsewhere, who would seek to usher in a significant rollback on SRHR in the country. Opposition to SRHR also surfaces in states throughout the country, ranging from suspicious murders of gay activists to Catholic clergy flexing their muscles and influencing local officials to defy federal laws. Further, the closeness of the vote in the 2006 Presidential race in Mexico underscores just how important it is to engage in the democratic process.

Still, progress continues, and this publication documents a Mexican-American collaboration that has contributed to that progress.

Laying the Groundwork: Meeting with Influential Colleagues

Much of SIECUS' previous international work had focused on helping many countries adapt and develop guidelines for comprehensive sexuality education, a process we began in the U.S. in 1991 which mushroomed as colleagues in other countries saw the model as a useful one and sought our assistance in country-level replications.¹³ Mexico had already undertaken this process and went further by actually securing textbooks for school-based sexuality education. Nonetheless, several discussions between SIECUS' international staff and colleagues in Mexico revealed additional needs and further opportunities for partnerships.

In November 2002, with the support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, SIECUS conducted an investigative trip to Mexico and met with nearly a dozen non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and another dozen private and public entities working in the fields of sexuality education, sexology, sexual and reproductive health, adolescent health, and HIV/AIDS. The primary purpose of these meetings and the trip itself was to create linkages between SIECUS and Mexican colleagues, to identify sexuality resources for Spanish-speaking populations, and to determine if there was sufficient interest and substance to create a more formal collaboration between SIECUS and similar Mexican NGOs.

As a result of this initial trip, in March 2003, SIECUS was invited to address a meeting in Mexico on the topic of challenges to sexuality education. In particular, we were asked to discuss how politics around abstinence and marriage promotion were impeding global efforts to promote and secure women's health and meet several universally regarded mileposts as set out in the ICPD Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goals. The meeting was convened by the highly regarded *Instituto Nacional de Perinatología* and Mexico's Secretary of Health, and faculty included some of Mexico's most prominent SRHR advocates. Among those advocates at the meeting was Marta Lamas, the country's most prominent SRHR leader (particularly around abortion), as well as several colleagues who would figure prominently in SIECUS' work in Mexico including José Aguilar of *Red Democracia y Sexualidad* (Democracy and Sexuality Network, or Demysex) and Gabriela Rodríguez of *Afluentes*.

The meeting dealt directly with several controversial issues, including abortion, adolescent sexuality and rights, and abstinence-only-until-marriage programs. Lamas, a long time abortion-rights advocate, challenged the country's draconian laws and urged a more rights-based approach. SIECUS provided a global perspective on the threat that the promotion of abstinence-only-until-marriage programming was having on the provision of more comprehensive sexuality education programming. Several Mexican colleagues, including Rodríguez and Aguilar, were also part of a roundtable that highlighted country-specific issues around adolescent's reproductive health, including the issue of abstinence-

only-until-marriage promotion in Mexico. Taken as a whole, the meeting was a clarion call to SRHR advocates in the country, and it came just three years into the first post-PRI era presidency.

Following the meeting and picking up on the strains around adolescent sexual health that surfaced, José Aguilar of Demysex approached SIECUS about developing a long-term relationship built around the development of advocacy capacity. Of particular concern was the lack of any mechanisms in Mexico to monitor the work of emerging right-wing SRHR opposition groups.

The affinity between SIECUS and Demysex was immediate. For starters, we shared a Board Member (Esther Corona of the Mexican Association for Sex Education or AMES) who encouraged the two groups to work together. But it became equally clear that our organizations were similarly focused on advancing healthy sexuality throughout the life span and that we each did so through both programmatic and policy avenues.

Demysex has a staffed professional office, a secretariat, based in Mexico City but it represents a network of over 275 diverse organizations throughout Mexico working on issues of sexuality education, gender, sexual orientation, and broader reproductive and sexual health and rights. Through this network, Demysex reaches not only every major national group working on SRHR-related issues in the country, but also state and local advocates in 22 states and the Federal District. The diversity of the network includes those working in urban, suburban, and rural areas and with various populations including youth, indigenous groups, and GLBT individuals.

In many ways, Demysex mirrors the SIECUS-led National Coalition to Support Sexuality Education (NCSSE) in the United States.¹⁴ SIECUS is the secretariat for this coalition which is made up of the leading national organizations working on sexuality education issues and has a dual function in promoting both advocacy and sexuality education programming. Both organizations are premised on the notion that collegial collaboration is essential for progress, and as a result, we have shared many of the same experiences.



Democracy and Sexuality (DEMYSEX) is a network comprising more than 275 organizations working in the fields of sexuality education and advocacy of sexual rights, including civil, government and academic organizations and institutions. It was founded in October 1996 and professionals in various disciplines participate in it.

Our mission is to strengthen sexuality education with a commitment to the exercise and advocacy of sexual rights and gender equity to advance in the construction of a democratic culture.

Our general objective is:

To develop a democratic, executive, dynamic and flexible national structure to educate various social sectors and influence public policies based on our principles.

Our strategic objectives are:

- 1.To improve the technical capacity of the representatives of the network's member organizations throughout the country for the promotion of sexual education from a political perspective.
- 2.To educate specific groups of civil society: teachers, parents, legislators, communicators, youth leaders and government authorities, on the importance of integrating sexual education and sexual rights into public policies.

www.demysex.org.mx

Another unique and beneficial aspect of the Demysex network is its dual focus on defending sexuality education and sexual rights and encouraging citizens to engage in the democratic process. Although its primary goal is to advance SRHR, Demysex strategically capitalizes on the emerging openness of Mexico's democracy to build a base of support for these issues beyond professional or governmental actors. As the PRI's power devolved and more conservative voices gained prominence, Demysex rightly assumed that persistent

and strong opposition to SRHR was just around the corner. Thus, the imperative was not only to work with the government, but also to expand the cadre of supportive voices for these issues in order to mitigate opposition, wherever and whenever it might emerge. In sum, Demysex's strategy was to build a grassroots movement to support sexuality education and sexual rights.

Building the Advocacy Plan, Part 1: Focusing on Sexuality Education and the Mexican Family

Throughout 2003, SIECUS worked with Demysex to assess the advocacy needs of the organization and its members. Demysex conducted individual outreach to networks in the states to identify specific needs and pinpoint strategic issue areas that SIECUS could be helpful in addressing.

This process yielded a wealth of information. The following issues and needs rose to the top:

STRATEGIC ISSUE AREAS

- Sexuality education is under threat from socially conservative elements and requires coordinated and proactive advocacy.
- There is an increasingly more vocal and organized opposition to SRHR issues in Mexico, and in particular, to the promotion of sexual rights, that must be monitored and countered.
- Funding resources to promote and support sexuality education and sexual rights are scarce in Mexico.

NEEDS OF MEMBERS

- Basic advocacy training for members, many of whom cannot get training elsewhere due to limited resources.
- A compendium of available resources on sexuality education for Mexico and/or other Spanish language materials from the Americas.

- Specific training in how to use the media as a resource in advocacy going beyond just creating press releases and paid media placement (this latter being used frequently in Mexico and known as *desplegados*).

Following the advocacy assessment, SIECUS and Demysex held a small planning meeting in Mexico City in early 2004 that included several members of SIECUS' senior team, as well as Aguilar, Corona, and Rodríguez. Corona and Rodríguez, while having their own organizational roles to play in Mexico, also served as Board Members of Demysex. The purpose of this meeting was to create the broad strokes of an advocacy plan for the next two years built on the information culled from the assessment process. The time period of two years was chosen to coincide with Mexico's national elections in 2006, an event that would undoubtedly have considerable impact on the political context of any future advocacy efforts.

The planning meeting, as well as a number of additional visits with key colleague organizations during this same trip, revealed the two most important issues on which we needed to focus our collective efforts; supporting family diversity and defending sexuality education.

THE WORLD CONGRESS OF FAMILIES IN MEXICO CITY: OPPORTUNITY STRIKES

One of the two major issues that came to the forefront in the assessment process, the issue of families and family structure, was the result of efforts at that time among social conservatives in the country (and indeed, globally) to narrowly define the family as consisting solely of married heterosexual couples. In the process these forces were deliberately stigmatizing any individual or family who lived in different arrangements.

During the planning meeting, we learned that the Third World Congress of Families would be holding its meeting in Mexico City in just a few short weeks. Unfortunately, as the survey of Demysex members had revealed, no organization in Mexico was regularly monitoring the opposition, and therefore, the importance of this Congress had not been immediately apparent to colleagues in the country. Nonetheless,

although the timing was tight, it was serendipitous and SIECUS and Demysex decided to use the World Congress of Families as a springboard for our larger advocacy effort.

The World Congress of Families is spearheaded by the U.S.-based Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society, a relatively obscure entity founded in 1975 and headed by Allan Carlson who is exceedingly well credentialed in the right-wing community. Although it is not as well known as other extreme religious right organizations in the U.S., the Howard Center is well connected to those more prominent conservative groups such as the Abstinence Clearinghouse, the Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute (C-FAM), the Eagle Forum, the Family Research Council, Focus on the Family, the Heritage Foundation, and Human Life International. The Howard Center is also part of the online nexus of right-wing organizations via its affiliation with www.townhall.com, a clearinghouse for right-wing opinion and commentary.

The Howard Center's website, www.profam.org, reflects the organization's nearly singular obsession with the decline of the so-called "natural family" which is defined as a lifelong, monogamous heterosexual marriage with the purpose of procreation.¹⁵ The Center does take on other issues related to SRHR. On sexuality, for example, the Howard Center writes: "sexuality is ordered for the procreation of children and the expression of love between husband and wife in the covenant of marriage. Marriage between a man and a woman forms the sole moral context for natural sexual union. Whether through pornography, promiscuity, incest or homosexuality, deviations from these created sexual norms cannot truly satisfy the human spirit."¹⁶

The Center is also emphatically anti-choice and describes its opposition to family planning by explaining that "human society depends on the renewal of the human population; the true population problem is depopulation, not overpopulation. Many nations are experiencing below-replacement fertility, arising from widespread abortion, birth control, lack of interest in marriage and declining family sizes." The Howard Center's positions are not only far from the global consensus on these issues, but Demysex also rightly viewed

them as contrary to the Mexican government's official positions, policies, and existing commitments in international agreements.

Nonetheless, the Howard Center and its supporters chose Mexico for the same reasons that brought SIECUS and Demysex together: the emerging political and social environment in Mexico provides opportunities for those who are organized to capitalize on them. Focus on the Family, for example, also recognized this and created an affiliate in Mexico, *Enfoque a la Familia México*, that opened in 2001. In fact, the World Congress was meant to further the efforts of these emerging right-wing groups. The Howard Center also strategically sought out a partner in Mexico that shared its own right-wing ideology and social issue agenda. It found that partner in *Red Familia* (or Family Network). *Red Familia*, which has a website at www.redfamilia.net, is an organization that became the official co-convener of the Congress.

Without a regular monitoring mechanism in place to track anti-SRHR groups and their activities, little was known at the time about *Red Familia*. We now know that the organization, begun in 1999, is rapidly growing into one of the largest anti-SRHR forces in Mexico, as well as playing a larger role in Latin America.¹⁷ Concerned Women for America has reported that between April and November 2005, *Red Familia* grew from a network of 150 groups to over 360 groups representing every state in Mexico. Concerned Women for America has also aided in *Red Familia*'s expansion by funneling U.S. government money to them under a contract to do important work in combating sex trafficking, though *Red Familia* has no significant experience in this area of work.¹⁸

The Mexican government, under the conservative regime of Vicente Fox, has also reportedly financed events held by *Red Familia* (including the World Congress of Families) and therefore assisted in the meteoric rise of the organization and its network.¹⁹ *Red Familia* was also successful in getting large support for the World Congress from two of Mexico's largest businesses, the financial institution Banamex and the nation's largest producer of bakery goods, Bimbo.

DEFENDING DIVERSE MEXICAN FAMILIES

SIECUS and Demysex worked hand in hand to quickly compile as much information as possible about *Red Familia*, the Howard Center, and the World Congress of Families as a whole in order to provide a coordinated and alternative voice to the one being assembled by right-wing ideologues. SIECUS combed through the list of conference speakers and presenters, many of whom were from U.S. right-wing organizations, and created a complete dossier to help inform Demysex's work. The dossier included both organizational and individual profiles, as well as key points to highlight the extremism of those profiled. Additionally, we laid out a general media plan to be carried out around the Congress, mechanisms to monitor the internal progress of the Congress meeting itself, and a strategy to draw in colleague organizations to work with Demysex.

From this starting point, Demysex, along with many colleague organizations, developed a more detailed and strategic plan to highlight the extremism of the World Congress, generate positive profiles of the diversity of Mexican families, and educate Mexican policymakers about the extreme positions being promoted by the Congress. This plan included an extensive media campaign centered on the creation of informational packets and press releases that were sent to major newspapers, radio, and television outlets in the country. The press conferences featured many civil society organizations and researchers working in the field of family and society from *El Colegio de Mexico*. Ten members of Demysex's network also registered and attended the conference. In this capacity, they were able to directly monitor and report on activities. Finally, Demysex created a brochure, "This is the Way Mexican Families Are," that helped to positively frame the diversity of family structures in the country. This brochure was widely distributed inside the Congress and to press and broader civil society organizations.

In the end, the efforts led by Demysex generated more media coverage in the Mexican press than the World Congress proceedings and thus offered an additional opportunity to promote diverse family structures and their value in Mexican life and society. Additionally, these same advocacy efforts created sufficient pressure that President Fox, in spite of

previous vocal support for the conference, decided at the last moment not to attend the conference. Most Mexican policymakers also steered clear of the conference.

Not surprisingly, the Bush Administration sent two high level delegates to the Congress: Ellen Saurebrey, then Ambassador to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and now Assistant Secretary of State on refugee issues; and Wade Horn, head of the ideologically driven Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health. Both of these individuals are vehemently anti-choice and strong promoters of abstinence-only and marriage promotion programs in place of more comprehensively focused efforts. Bush also sent a letter to the attendees that aligned his own beliefs and policies with those of the Congress, thus indicating how closely tied the global opposition to SRHR is to U.S. politics.²⁰

In the U.S., SIECUS led the international press outreach and worked closely with our colleagues in Mexico to disseminate appropriate and timely information to press and colleagues around the globe. We also educated our own national policymakers about the event as right-wing politicians in the U.S. Congress championed the World Congress.²¹

The work conducted by SIECUS, Demysex, and other colleague organizations in Mexico to counter the World Congress of Families unfolded in the span of just two-and-a-half weeks. However, this was to be but the beginning of a larger proactive agenda around the diversity of families. Globally, we have increased our monitoring of the groups involved as they set up similar conferences in other parts of the world in order to galvanize anti-SRHR opposition forces. Since the World Congress in Mexico, we have monitored and reported on similar meetings and are preparing for the Fourth World Congress in May 2007. Strategically, this meeting is being held in Poland, a new country to the European Union (EU) landscape and one that is already proving to be problematic on EU policy and resources on SRHR.²² For example, Polish Members of the European Parliament are increasingly bringing their anti-choice and homophobic rhetoric into the broader European conversation even though much of Europe dispensed with this type of hypermoralism decades ago.

Organizaciones que participaron en la producción del video *Las familias somos...* y puntos de referencias para mayor información.

Afluentes S.C.
afluentes@prodigy.net.mx
55631485 • 55637978

Alianza Nacional por el Derecho a Decidir (ANDAR)
coordinacion@andar.org.mx
52118082

Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir
cdmxc@cddmx.org
55542902

Red de los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos en México (ddeser)
ddeser@ddeser.org
56587114

Red Democracia y Sexualidad, A.C. (DEMYSEX)
demysel@demysel.org.mx
55249496

Equidad de género: ciudadanía, trabajo y familia, A.C.
equidad@equidad.org.mx
56587114

Fundación Mexicana para la Planeación Familiar, A.C.
mexfaminfo@mexfam.org.mx
554870030

Letra S, SIDA, Cultura, Vida Cotidiana, A.C.
notiese02@letrae.org.mx
56727096 • 55322751

Modemmujer, Red de comunicación electrónica
modemmujer@laneta.apc.org
55545700

Red de los Derechos de la Infancia en México
buzon@derechosinfancia.org.mx
56042466 • 56042458

México Agosto, 2004.



Video educativo **Las familias somos...**

Guía didáctica

Presentación

El video educativo *Las familias somos...* fue elaborado a partir de una serie de reflexiones acerca de la situación de las familias en nuestro país. Las constantes transformaciones del mundo actual muestran la gran diversidad en estilos de vida, necesidades y características de los grupos sociales, así como formas de vida familiar.

El propósito de este material es propiciar el conocimiento y la reflexión sobre los diferentes tipos de organización familiar y analizar su función en el origen, el desarrollo y la formación de las personas. Las familias se construyen paso a paso con el trato diario a través del cual se forman valores, alianzas, vínculos afectivos; además se desarrollan estilos de comunicación, se norman las conductas y prácticas sexuales, se establecen relaciones económicas y se construye un proyecto de vida.

El video *Las familias somos...* nos presenta a:

- La familia monoparental
- La familia compuesta
- La familia co-residente
- La familia con hijos e hijas
- La familia extensa
- La familia unipersonal
- La familia sin hijos o hijas

Orientaciones para educadores y/o comunicadores

Pautas didácticas para que los educadores y capacitadores promuevan el análisis y discusión del video.

- Introduzca a la sesión a partir de una lluvia de ideas sobre las creencias más comunes en torno a la familia, lo que ellos han aprendido o saben.
- Explique que el video trata el tema de las familias. A través de la proyección conocerán a siete familias mexicanas que viven en el Distrito

Federal, Morelos y Guerrero. Durante los 25 minutos, los protagonistas compartirán algunas de sus vivencias sobre su historia familiar.

Una vez terminada la transmisión del video *Las familias somos...* favorezca la discusión a partir de las siguientes pautas:

- Pida que compartan algún sentimiento o sensación acerca del video.
- Solicite que se organicen equipos para discutir las preguntas:
 - ¿Qué características tienen las familias mexicanas actuales?
 - ¿Qué papel juegan los hombres y las mujeres en las familias mexicanas?
 - ¿Qué papel tienen los hijos e hijas en las familias?
 - ¿Qué hace posible que las familias superen retos y vivan en armonía?
 - ¿Qué ideas o creencias personales han cambiado después de ver este video?
- Pida que anoten sus conclusiones en una hoja de rotafolio para presentarlas en la plenario.

Cuando todos los grupos han presentado sus resultados, el educador enfatizará sobre lo más relevante.

Ideas a reafirmar:

- Las familias tienen su propia historia de vida que les da sentido para establecer sus valores, compromisos, alianzas, afectos, retos y proyectos.
- Una familia se construye con disposición, tolerancia, esfuerzo y compromiso. Es un sistema de alianzas que brinda seguridad, confianza y sentido de pertenencia.
- Existen diferentes tipos de familias: monoparental, compuesta, co-residente, con hijos e hijas, extensa, unipersonal y sin hijos. Las formas en que se construyen los hogares son diversos y deben ser respetados por las demás personas.
- En cada familia se resuelven necesidades emocionales, económicas, sexuales, intelectuales y culturales; así como también se enfrentan dilemas y duelos que son parte de su propia historia.
- La comunicación es importante para saber qué piensan y quieren los integrantes de la familia, así como aceptar y respetar las diferencias que existan entre ellos y ellas.

The pamphlet created to help promote the "Families Are..." video. It provides helpful advice about how to use the video in various settings and offers questions to generate conversation.

Later in 2004, Demysex built on the work around the World Congress of Families and secured funding to create and distribute a video, “Families Are...” (*“Las familias somos...”*) that told the story of several Mexican families of diverse structures. Families headed by same-sex couples and families where deliberate decisions were made to remain childless were featured. In 2004–2005, the video was shown in several venues around the country as Demysex’s state networks organized local viewings. It also generated press coverage and helped to provide a positive portrayal of the diversity in Mexican families, each with their own strengths and contributions to individual and societal well-being.

Finally, Demysex has continually sought to underscore the Mexican family advocacy with a secure footing in research and as a result, has created linkages with key academics who are doing research in this field, adding significant credibility to their ongoing work.

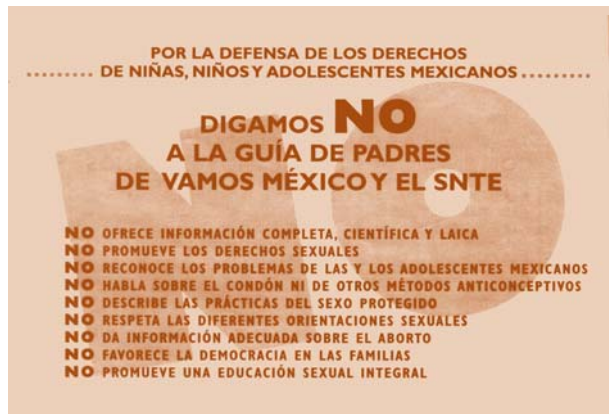
SEXUALITY EDUCATION UNDER THREAT

The second issue that was most prominent in the assessment process was sexuality education and it was widely agreed upon that a strong and coordinated advocacy effort around comprehensive sexuality education programming was necessary. As a concept, Demysex and its members viewed comprehensive sexuality education as an umbrella term, encompassing progressive efforts aimed at HIV and STD prevention, family planning, and healthy sexuality, including understanding sexual orientation and gender equity and identity. It had been nearly a decade since the last large national effort to support sexuality education had been undertaken in Mexico. That effort was then, and continued to be, part of Mexico’s larger agenda of health, human rights, and development for its people. Still, with the increasing political might of newly emboldened social conservative forces, Demysex’s members viewed this time to be right for a new national effort.

Part of the sense of need arose from several recent incidences in which the Fox Administration’s policies on sexuality education looked much more like U.S. abstinence-only and marriage promotion policies than extensions of the decade-long expansion of sexuality education in the country. Between March and May 2001, the highly influential Director of the National Integral Family Development System (DIF), in partnership with

the President's own daughter, launched a nationwide campaign against teen pregnancy that focused almost exclusively on abstinence. Thankfully, Demysex was successful in coordinating a top-down advocacy strategy that forced a suspension of that campaign. The effort's mantra was "On Sex Education: NOT a Step Back!"²³

Still, the new government, and indeed the Fox family itself, continued its push for abstinence-only programs. Another effort, led by the President's wife, Marta Sahagún Fox and her foundation, Let's Go Mexico (*Vamos México*), sought to engage parents by creating a parents' guide on sex and teens. The guide was published and distributed in partnership with the Secretary of Health. Demysex's review of the parents' guide found that it contained outdated 50's-era guidance characterized by gender stereotypes and a lack of respect for adolescents. This guide also ran contrary to an effort led by Demysex, in concert with the country's National Human Rights Commission (an entity deliberately removed from transitory political pressures of individual office holders), that resulted in a widely distributed declaration affirming the sexual rights of adolescents in the country. This declaration is a key foundational element of the right to sexuality education for Mexico's youth.²⁴



A flyer disseminated throughout Mexico by Demysex, with key points for opposing the parents' guide on behalf of adolescent rights and reasons to support sexuality education.

Demysex helped lead an effort that halted the distribution of the parents' guide from the Secretary of Health, and only 20 percent of the originally planned number of copies were ever printed. However, what these two incidents underscored was that broader work was needed and that the proverbial act of “putting out fires” was necessary but not sufficient to prevent additional challenges to sexuality education. Demysex would have to do more to secure governmental support to continue to expand—not constrict and censor—sexuality education. In addition, Demysex's leaders wanted to pursue avenues that helped embolden and empower the state networks.

Building the Advocacy Plan, Part 2: Supporting Sexuality Education in Mexico in the Long Term

To move sexuality education advocacy forward, SIECUS and Demysex developed a larger, two-fold strategy. First, we would work toward a national public education campaign in Mexico about sexuality education that would be a collaboration between public and private sectors. Demysex has had a long history of working positively and proactively with the government—in addition to opposing the aforementioned unproductive government efforts—on such issues as human rights and health, and securing sexuality-related materials in public school textbooks for students. It was agreed that public-private collaboration would be the best way to bring unified support to the envisioned campaign. Second, SIECUS would work with Demysex to develop advocacy capacity among the secretariat office, in the network as a whole, and in select state networks that would support the campaign and the more general goals and mission of Demysex.

DEVELOPING THE CAMPAIGN

Demysex participates in many coalitions and networks in Mexico. One of these coalitions is CONASIDA, a group made up of government officials and Mexican NGOs working on HIV/AIDS. CONASIDA is designed to be the conduit for civil society input into the Mexican government's HIV/AIDS work which is carried out by CENSIDA, the country's National Center on HIV/AIDS.

Over the period of a year, Demysex's National Coordinator, José Aguilar, and other leaders of colleague NGOs, took the idea of a national public education campaign on sexuality education to CONASIDA. The decision to work with CONASIDA was a strategic one for two important reasons. First, Demysex believed that the opposition to their efforts would likely be minimized if they embedded support for sexuality education as HIV prevention. Second, using this government-supported avenue of securing a campaign would ensure a collaboration between government and civil society, thereby magnifying the effort and its impact. This strategy paid off and they were successful in garnering support.

On December 1, World AIDS Day 2005, Mexico launched a national campaign under the banner of "Sexuality Education...Our Promise." The banners were seen all over the host city of Oaxaca, Mexico and marked the beginning of a year-long campaign aimed at increasing public support and prioritizing policy and funding for sexuality education as a key component in Mexico's efforts to combat HIV/AIDS. Throughout 2006, the campaign is being scaled up in several key cities around the country as well. Shortly after the campaign was launched, for the first time ever, the Mexican legislature prioritized prevention funding for the country's HIV-prevention programming by specifically setting aside additional funds for the purposes of sexuality education and other HIV-prevention initiatives.

Youth marching on World AIDS Day 2005 in Oaxaca, Mexico. They are holding one of the banners of the national campaign on sexuality education and it reads: "Sexuality Education...Our Promise."



INCREASING ADVOCACY CAPACITY

As the educational campaign was being developed, SIECUS also worked with Demysex to develop advocacy capacity among the secretariat office, in the network as a whole, and in select state networks.

In developing the advocacy capacity of the Demysex secretariat, SIECUS and Demysex work regularly with one another in an ongoing information exchange and advocacy planning process. More concretely, SIECUS worked on an information exchange program that brought our Demysex colleagues to the United States in May of 2004. We held a series of meetings with U.S.-based colleagues, including with offices of Members of Congress. Through these meetings, our partners gained a greater understanding of the ways in which U.S.-based groups carry out advocacy efforts.

We also had Demysex's National Coordinator, José Aguilar, as well as Demysex Board Members Corona and Rodríguez, present their experiences in Mexico at the bi-annual meeting of the SIECUS-led National Coalition to Support Sexuality Education (NCSSE). This provided them with a venue to engage with the major groups in the U.S. working on sexuality education policy and programming. NCSSE meetings are geared toward providing key updates and overviews of timely issues, and therefore this opportunity also exposed our Mexican colleagues to a great deal of information and strategy discussion related to sexuality education advocacy.

On this same information exchange, SIECUS, Demysex, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), and the George Washington University Center for Global Health hosted a briefing titled "Challenges to Reproductive and Sexual Health in Mexico." In addition to our Demysex colleagues, PAHO's Regional Adviser on HIV/AIDS, Rafael Mazín, moderated the briefing. This venue brought together health and advocacy experts, as well as strengthened the linkages with PAHO, a key multi-lateral partner in the Americas.

To support the broader Demysex network, SIECUS has been a key partner and contributor in each of the last two annual meetings of the members of Demysex's network

in Mexico City. At the 2004 annual meeting, SIECUS led a two-day workshop to bring the network members together to build realistic advocacy plans. Attendees worked in groups broken out by Mexico's geographical regions and, though many of the individual network members are small and work with few financial resources, they committed to a series of activities to support the two main themes of sexuality education and the diversity of Mexican families. Demysex's role was to provide resources and support to members throughout the year in order to fulfill the commitments of the advocacy plans. (The agenda for this meeting is included as Appendix A.)

At this same annual meeting, we also began to address the identified deficiency in general advocacy skills by role-playing various situations in which advocacy skills are needed. We framed these exercises around the two primary advocacy themes—defending diverse families and supporting sexuality education.

For the 2005 annual meeting, held in mid-October, SIECUS led a day-long workshop focused on activities to support the national sexuality education campaign that was set to be launched in December. One part of the workshop was designed to increase media advocacy skills (another area identified in the advocacy assessment process as needing support). SIECUS' media expert conducted a training on some key advocacy skills and provided several resources on how to effectively work with the media. (This resource is included in Spanish as Appendix B.)

The second part of the day focused again on improving basic advocacy skills for supporting sexuality education. For this session, we translated another resource, SIECUS' Ten Tips for Great Advocacy, into Spanish. The training closely followed the tips included in this tool. (This resource is included in Spanish as Appendix C.) Finally, state networks brainstormed specific actions to support the national sexuality education campaign throughout the year.

Another gap that had been clearly identified by Demysex members was the need for resources about sexuality education advocacy. As part of the effort to fill this gap, SIECUS worked with the International Planned Parenthood Federation – Western Hemisphere

Region to translate a recently released advocacy and opposition guide into Spanish. The original publication, titled *Understanding Religious and Political Opposition to Reproductive Health and Rights*, was a project of SIECUS, Planned Parenthood Federation of America's Global Partners program, and the International Planned Parenthood Federation – European Network and was disseminated widely throughout Europe, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The Spanish language version has now not only been widely disseminated in Mexico, but throughout Latin America. The publication is a brief, easily accessible guide to the issues and key arguments to support SRHR and includes an extensive section on sexuality education.²⁵

In early 2006, SIECUS also worked with Demysex member, the Mexican Association of Sex Education, to address the identified need among Demysex members for a list of available sexuality education materials in Spanish. This additional resource is now available online at <http://www.siecus.org/pubs/biblio/spanishres.html> (in Spanish only) and contains the most up-to-date and comprehensive list of sexuality education materials available throughout Latin America.

Finally, SIECUS and Demysex worked together to develop the advocacy capacity of select state networks.

Because of limited resources, we were only able to bring this level of activity to two state networks in 2005—Jalisco and Querétaro. Each state was chosen for different reasons.

Jalisco, which contains Mexico's second largest city, Guadalajara, was selected because its network is quite strong and numerous, yet Jalisco is also one of the most conservative places in the country. As a testament to this dubious distinction, Jalisco was chosen as the city to host Mexico's first Congress on the Family in 2005, an indigenous outgrowth inspired by the galvanized forces from the World Congress of Families.



Querétaro was chosen in part because of its proximity to Mexico City (just a two-hour drive) but also because of an unfortunate incident that brought homophobia into the public's consciousness when a local gay activist, and a leader in the Demyxex network, Octavio Acuña, was murdered in his condom store in that city. The murder became increasingly controversial when the police did not sufficiently investigate the crime because of the victim's sexual orientation and his previous criticisms of the police force for not enforcing laws when hate crimes based on sexual orientation were committed.

In Jalisco, SIECUS and Demyxex led a day-long advocacy training with members of Demyxex's state network and with the support of the state's department of health. Over 25 people attended the training. In Querétaro, a smaller and shorter training was held with about 15 participants from throughout the state and with the support of the Autonomous University of Querétaro. The training was truncated to accommodate the local network who had organized a town hall-style meeting to draw attention to Acuña's death and more broadly, the rights of gays and lesbians in Mexico. This event drew a standing-room-only crowd of nearly 200 people and representatives from both SIECUS and Demyxex spoke about issues related to sexual orientation and GLBT rights.

Smith and Corona lead a day-long advocacy training in Guadalajara for advocates from several of the member organizations of Demyxex.



Moving Forward: Lessons Learned to Guide Future Work

Much work remains to be done in Mexico. What is clear is that across our common border, SIECUS and Demyssex are learning from one another and helping to create a more enabling environment in both countries for sexual and reproductive health and rights. To date, a number of conclusions can be drawn that can help provide a roadmap for future work in Mexico and beyond.

OPPOSITION MAPPING AND ONGOING MONITORING

With the shifting political dynamics in Mexico, and the social and political forces let loose by this reality, the groups opposed to sexuality education, abortion rights, GLBT equality, and similar issues are moving swiftly. However, there appears to be no baseline of knowledge about these types of groups in the country. Until recently, in fact, there was a sense that the opposition was primarily conservative clergy or that there was very little to worry about. However, it became clear that a more cohesive movement was emerging when *Red Familia*, an upstart group begun as recently as 1999, was able to pull off a major international conference with several thousand attendees from around the world, leading officials from influential countries, the support of the country's President, and major financial investment from key businesses in Mexico. Advocates now understand that there is cause for concern and that mapping the opposition in Mexico, state-by-state, is vital. The results of this information should be widely shared and updated as needed.

Mapping the opposition, however, is not sufficient as the information is dated as soon as it is compiled. Therefore, some ongoing mechanism needs to be put in place to monitor the activities and efforts of opposition forces—both within and outside of the government. SIECUS and Demyssex will be working to create such a mechanism, which may be modeled after the *International Right Wing Watch*, a resource that SIECUS compiles monthly and shares with colleagues around the world via key listservs.

GOOD ADVOCACY IS BOTH REACTIVE AND PROACTIVE

Both the family diversity and sexuality education efforts illustrate that good advocacy should have elements that are both reactive and proactive. For example, the initial phase of the family diversity work reactively countered an anti-SRHR meeting that was happening in Mexico. However, this work quickly became a much larger effort that did not stop at countering the World Congress of Families meeting, but proactively set out to promote and defend the diversity of families that are part and parcel of Mexican life. The advocacy around sexuality education similarly mirrors this combination of both reactive and proactive elements.

“The joint work between SIECUS and Demysex has been extremely important to us in Mexico. It has enabled us to create strategies to conduct intensive work in the area of sexuality education and the level of technical assistance and consultation made Mexico’s national Sexuality Education Campaign possible.”

**José Aguilar
National Coordinator
Demysex**

We must constantly react to those forces that seek to undermine SRHR. At the same time, we can and should use strategically chosen opportunities of reactive advocacy to build a more positive vision as well. Much of the success in Mexico is a result of having followed this strategy.

MOBILIZING VOTERS

It is increasingly clear that Mexico’s newly competitive democracy means that whoever works the quickest and most effectively to mobilize voters will likely have the most success in shaping future public policies in Mexico around SRHR issues. SRHR advocates must shift tactics to mobilize and empower issue-oriented voters. Interest group advocacy is likely to see a decline in its influence if it does not connect itself with the ability to deliver votes in what is clearly becoming an increasingly competitive political and electoral process in the country.

MORE ADVOCACY TRAINING IN THE STATES

SIECUS and Demysex were unable to meet the many requests for advocacy trainings in the states of Mexico. Going forward, while it is important to continue advocacy trainings at the larger national meetings, we will be allocating more resources to the important work with advocates at the state level. Again, because of the shifting political environment, an approach to developing advocacy capacity that focuses on multiple levels is more likely to be successful.

“The Demysex-SIECUS collaboration helped support the network in Jalisco by developing capacity in advocacy. Together we created a program and action plan to engage in a dialogue with political candidates and Deputies and thus to offer proposals to include sexuality education in the programs and laws of the state.”

**Armando Díaz Camarena
Grupo Diversidad Sexual**

LIMITED FISCAL RESOURCES

Mexico is considered a middle-income country with limited resources. While there is a rich history of civil society, the same cannot be said of philanthropic enterprise and certainly not philanthropy focused on SRHR. More recently, this has been compounded by the withdrawal of large U.S. donors. While there is no easy answer to this situation, we believe that Mexico’s current environment presents both an opportunity to advance SRHR, but also perhaps the equal chance that SRHR could be rolled back. This is particularly important because in many ways Mexico is seen as a leader in the region. Unfortunately, funding is drying up at the precise moment of this significant challenge. New fundraising strategies need to be encouraged in-country, but we also need to be vocal in encouraging international donors to invest in civil society organizations in Mexico that are working on SRHR issues.

REFERENCES

- ¹ *World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision, Mexico Demographic Profile*, (New York: Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, 2003), accessed 12 June 2006, <<http://esa.un.org/unpp/p2k0data.asp>>.
- ² *UNFPA Worldwide: Population, Health & Socio-Economic Indicators / Policy Developments Mexico*, (New York: United Nations Population Fund, 2005), accessed 5 July 2006, <<http://www.unfpa.org/profile/mexico.cfm>>.
- ³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴ *Why Condoms Count: Selected Indicators of Vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, Data Tables, 2004 Update* (Washington, DC: Population Action International, 2004), accessed 25 June 2006, <<http://www.populationaction.org/resources/publications/condomscount/data.htm>>.
- ⁵ *2006 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*, (Geneva: United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS, 2006), 407, accessed 2 July 2006, <http://www.unaids.org/en/HIV_data/2006GlobalReport/default.asp>.
- ⁶ *Why Condoms Count*.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸ *UNFPA Worldwide: Population, Health & Socio-Economic Indicators / Policy Developments Mexico*.
- ⁹ *Mexico Profile*, (Population Reference Bureau), accessed 5 July 2006, <<http://www.prb.org/datafind/prjprbdata/wcprbdata7.asp?DW=DR&SL=&SA=1>>.
- ¹⁰ *Why Condoms Count*.
- ¹¹ Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, Egypt, 5-13 September 1994, U.N. Doc.A/CONF.171/13/Rev.1 (1995), accessed 10 June 2005, <http://www.unfpa.org/icpd/icpd_poa.htm/>.
- ¹² “Mexico,” *Country Profiles for Population and Reproductive Health, Policy Developments and Indicators* (New York: United Nations Population Fund and Population Reference Bureau, 2005), accessed 12 June 2006, <<http://www.unfpa.org/profile/mexico.cfm>>.
- ¹³ For additional information on this aspect of SIECUS’ international work, see Developing Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education, <http://www.siecus.org/inter/inte0010.html>.
- ¹⁴ For a complete list of member organizations and other information about the Coalition, see <http://www.ncsse.org>.
- ¹⁵ “The natural family is the fundamental social unit, inscribed in human nature, and centered on the voluntary union of a man and a woman in the lifelong covenant of marriage. The natural family is defined by marriage, procreation and, in some cultures, adoption.” *Principles and Purpose*, Howard Center, accessed 3 July 2006, <http://www.profam.org/THC/xthc_principles.htm>.
- ¹⁶ *Principles and Purpose*, Howard Center, accessed 3 July 2006, <http://www.profam.org/THC/xthc_principles.htm>.
- ¹⁷ *Edgar González Ruiz, “Dinero republicano para conservadores de AL,”* [voltage.org](http://www.voltairenet.org), accessed 3 July 2006, <<http://www.voltairenet.org/article120655.html>>.
- ¹⁸ Brenda Zurita, “BLI Unites the U.S. to Fight Sex Trafficking,” Beverly LaHaye Institute, 25 November 2005, accessed 3 July 2006, <<http://www.cwfa.org/articles/9524/BLI/family/index.htm>>; and “CWA and Mexican NGO Partner to Combat ‘Modern-Day Slavery,’” Concerned Women for America, Press Release, published 7 April 2005, accessed 3 July 2005, <<http://www.cwfa.org/printerfriendly.asp?id=7866&department=media&categoryid=family>> <<http://www.cwfa.org/printerfriendly.asp?id=7866&department=media&categoryid=family>> >.
- ¹⁹ Ruiz.
- ²⁰ Letter obtained by SIECUS, dated 26 March 2004. The letter read, in part: “Around the world, families are the source of

help, hope, and stability for individuals and nations. As one of the pillars of civilizations, families must remain strong and we must defend them during this time of great change. To ensure that America's future generations are prepared to face new opportunities and challenges, my Administration has taken important steps to promote strong families, preserve the sanctity of marriage, and protect the well-being of children. My Administration also encourages adoption and supports crisis pregnancy programs, parental notification laws, and other measures to help us continue to build a culture of life."

²¹ Letter obtained by SIECUS, dated 26 March 2004 showed that five Republican Members of the U.S. House of Representatives, led by Representative Donald Manzullo of the state of Illinois, greeted the World Congress attendees thanking them for being part of the effort. The letter read, in part, "[the World Congress] showed the world that people of many different faiths and cultures could agree on one important conclusion—the natural family is the key for all nations who wish to experience economic and social prosperity."

²² *World Congress of Families IV*, Howard Center, accessed 5 July 2005, <<http://www.worldcongress.org/WCF4/wcf4.ini.htm>>.

²³ Background Information, Demysex, accessed 5 July 2005, <<http://www.demysex.org.mx/nuevo/indexingles.htm>>.

²⁴ This document is not available in English. However, Demysex's more general statement on sexuality education as a basic right is available at <http://www.demysex.org.mx/nuevo/indexingles.htm>.

²⁵ English, Spanish and Japanese language versions of the Opposition Guide are available at <http://www.siecus.org/inter/inte0012.html>.

APPENDIX A

Agenda for Advocacy Workshop Monday, September 20 – Demysex

9:00 to 10:00 Panel on Advocacy Experiences from the Mexican States

10:00 to 14:00

1. Advocacy: Why Us, Why Now? Bill Smith (20 Minutes)

This is a general overview of the opposition globally and why all of us must become more fully engaged in advocacy if we are to protect sexual and reproductive health and rights.

2. An Advocacy Strategy for Demysex

This is an overview of the advocacy plan that we have developed together, with a particular emphasis upon the previous and ongoing work related to the family. This is the time for Demysex to get its members excited about the plan and their role in helping to bring about success. Some key things to address might be why this is important for Mexico, how Demysex and SIECUS are working together, and how important the participation of Demysex members is to the success of the strategy.

3. Small Group Work on the Strategy (20 Minutes)

Participants will break into regions and explore a few key questions:

- a) What are the general reactions/impressions to the advocacy strategy?
- b) Are there things that are missing?

c) What are the unique regional and/or state-specific challenges to achieving success on the strategy?

4. Small Groups Report Out (15 minutes)

5. Break (10 minutes)

6. Advocacy to Policymakers (50 minutes)

Work as a large group facilitated by Bill (15 minutes)

Who are they in Mexico?

Which policymakers are most relevant to policies on sexuality?

How do we reach them in Mexico?

Break into small groups by random number assignments. (20 minutes)

(Show the Mexican Family video here as an example of messages.)

What are the messages related to Demyssex's advocacy strategy that are most relevant for policymakers?

On sexuality education?

On the family?

Report Out from Small Groups (15 minutes)

7. Break (5 minutes) During the break, we will match up key policymaker audiences with key messages that were created in the last session. These matchings will be the starting point for work in the next session.

8. What is advocacy? (15 minutes)

Bill will talk about the basics of advocacy and the types of advocacy strategies.

9. Skills Building Session (45 minutes)

The same small groups from the previous session will each be asked to come up with an advocacy strategy for a specific message and to a specific policymaker audience (created during the break). For example, Group 1 might be asked to create a letter writing campaign to the State DIF with a key message about the Mexican family. Group 2 might be asked to write an opinion piece for a newspaper to support a key message around the need for comprehensive sexuality education. (30 minutes)

Small groups asked to present their strategies. (15 minutes)

14:00 to 15:30 Almuerzo

15:30 to 20:00

1. Knowing the Opposition (80 minutes)

The session will be dedicated to the importance of monitoring and reporting on the activities of the opposition.

Intro – Monitoring the Opposition – Bill (15 minutes)

Some examples of effective tools from the US – Bill (20 minutes)

Discuss *Provida-gate* report from Mexico as another example. (40 minutes)

Question and Answer Session

2. Break (10 minutes)

3. Skills Building Session – Using the Internet for Advocacy (70 minutes)

Bill to present on examples of using the internet for advocacy. (25 minutes)

Break into small groups by regions to explore how internet advocacy might be moved forward in Mexico. (30 minutes)

Small groups to report out. (15 minutes)

4. Wrap up.

APPENDIX B

Ideas para trabajar con los medios

La participación de los medios es una gran manera de difundir su mensaje, de alcanzar a otros miembros de interesados de la comunidad que aún no estén involucrados y de influir en tomadores de decisión claves.

Conozca a sus Medios

La mayoría de los medios –prensa, radio, y televisión- están geográficamente orientados. Algunos son estrictamente locales y están solamente interesados en una ciudad o un área particular. Otros canales son estatales, nacionales, o internacionales en su alcance.

Conozca con quién está hablando y dirija discusión a sus intereses. Por ejemplo, una manera excelente de conseguir que una historia nacional referente por ejemplo a leyes federales, es hablar de cómo la política federal afecta a su comunidad local.

Cree una lista de los medios y póngala al día regularmente

Lea la prensa en su área con frecuencia y haga una lista de los reporteros que cubren sus las fuentes de salud y educación.

Busque en las sección amarilla del directorio telefónico bajo "periódicos," "radio," y "televisión". Llame a cada medio y pida hablar con los jefes de redacción. Pregunte quienes son los reporteros que cubren las fuentes de salud o educación.

Usted puede también buscar a otras organizaciones involucradas en educación de sexualidad. Tal vez tengan listas de medios que puedan compartir con usted. Recuerde poner al día su lista sobre una base regular.

Proporcione a los medios los hechos

Los hechos hablan para sí mismos. Esté preparado siempre con tres o cuatro mensajes básicos argumentar porque se necesita la educación integral de la sexualidad. Respalde los mensajes con datos y hechos. Por ejemplo, usted podría citar a un reportero los estudios que demuestran que programas de la educación de la sexualidad que enseñan tanto abstinencia y como anticoncepción retrasan actividad sexual, reducen el número de compañeros, y aumentan el uso de anticonceptivos entre adolescentes.

Tenga a la mano información actual sobre embarazo adolescente, la enfermedad sexual, infecciones de transmisión sexual (ITS) en su comunidad, así como la información sobre los planes de estudios actuales que incluyen educación de la sexualidad en escuelas. Usted puede hacer una historia más impactante hablando de las experiencias de una persona o de un grupo particular dentro de la comunidad.

No se meta en 2aguas pantanosas”

Los reporteros necesitan historias y están particularmente interesados en aquellas que impliquen controversia y discusión. Ellos siempre intentarán contrapuntear un argumento o grupo contra otro en referencia a asuntos sociales delicados. No se sienta intimidado. Conserve sus mensajes principales y respáldelos con datos. Nunca critique a los medios o a los grupos que se encuentran en la posición contraria a la suya.

Proporcione Historias Locales

Muchos reporteros también buscan historias con una perspectiva humana. Es importante siempre tener historias locales para alimentar a reporteros.

Escriba un boletín de prensa

Un boletín de prensa es una herramienta usada para alertar a los medios. Usted puede utilizar un boletín de prensa para afirmar una posición, para lanzar una campaña, para anunciar un acontecimiento, o para responder a declaraciones o eventos recientes.

Difunda su mensaje

Envíe sus boletines de prensa por E-mail, fax y o mensajería a los reporteros en su lista de prensa. Si su boletín anuncia un acontecimiento en particular, envíelo con anticipación de la fecha programada. Es conveniente hacer los contactos por la mañana antes de que los reporteros comiencen a escribir sus historias para ese día.

De seguimiento con una llamada telefónica

Llame a los reporteros o redactores en su lista el día después de que usted haya enviado el boletín. Pregunte si desean reunirse con usted, un representante de su grupo o con personas que apoyen su causa. Ofrezca organizar las entrevistas.

Si la historia es de interés inmediato, llame a los reporteros media hora después de que haya enviado el boletín de prensa. Si usted está anunciando un acontecimiento, llame tres días antes del acontecimiento como recordatorio.

Permanézcase en contacto

Continúe el contacto hasta un día antes de que el acontecimiento y envíe una nota o llame por teléfono a los reporteros después de que hayan publicado la historia para agradecerles.

Escriba un Carta al Editor

Las cartas al editor son una gran manera de conseguir los periódicos cubrir sus intereses y le permiten elaborar su mensaje muy cuidadosamente.

APPENDIX C

Diez puntos provechos de SIECUS a el estupendo advocacy

1. Es importante organizer en el nivel local
2. Anticipe sus debilidades y planee para ellas
3. Monitor a grupos de la oposicion y sus actividades
4. Usted es el experto: ahora posea el titulo
5. Nuestra poder en una democracia es nosotros y somos ciudadanos y votamos
6. Es un pais grande y diverso: el internet es su amigo
7. La estrategia del corazon y de la cabeza – usted puede tener solamente una oportunidad
8. Abraze y posea el territorio de la familia y de los padres
9. Haga el ruido, pero no se sienta siempre como usted para necesitar ser la persona o organizacion que hace ruido
10. Crear un mecanismo rapido de la repuesta es esencial



SEXUALITY INFORMATION AND EDUCATION
COUNCIL OF THE UNITED STATES

130 West 42nd Street
Suite 350
New York, NY 10036
phone: 212.819.9770

1706 R Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009
phone: 202.265.2405

www.siecus.org