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Advocacy for Reproductive Justice in Miami-Dade County Schools: Planning a Campaign to Influence Sex Education Policies

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Planning a Campaign to Influence Sex Education Policies

ABSTRACT

This capstone paper is based on my professional practicum with Mi Lola, a women's health justice organization based in Miami, Florida. The paper offers a conceptual framework in which Mi Lola approaches women's health justice and where Mi Lola identifies within the broader women's reproductive rights movement. It describes the organization's emphasis on Latinas and women of color when addressing reproductive health concerns of Miami-Dade County through workshops, leadership trainings, advocacy, civic engagement and collective action. Those activities identified a great community concern: the current sex education policies (including the state of Florida's "abstinence only" policy) appear to be one of the root problems threatening the reproductive health of Miami-Dade County, with Latinas being especially susceptible. Therefore Mi Lola plans to focus their grassroots efforts on changing the sex education policies in the county's public school system.

Based on knowledge acquired through my work with Mi Lola, and through various forms of primary and secondary research, I created a planning document that will inform an advocacy campaign for comprehensive sex education in Miami-Dade County. It explains the current sex education policies and legislation while offering critically analyzed evidence about the different types of sex education. The document offers data on the sexual health of Miami-Dade County and of Florida as a whole. It references case studies of other Florida counties who have managed to change their policies that reflect a more comprehensive sex education mandate to be used as potential models to learn from. Finally, the document offers Mi Lola next steps to move forward in planning a campaign.

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PIM 71-J

The paper concludes with a summary of general lessons about advocacy that can be learned from the challenges I experienced and insights I gained while conducting this research.