

ISSUE 3 - 2022

# PASS IT ON! (AND ON, AND ON...)

SAFE SCHOOLS, FREE OF VIOLENCE

**IN SUPPORT  
OF SDG4.**

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

**TARGET 4A. [...]**

provide safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all.

**4** QUALITY  
EDUCATION



# OUR CHILDREN NEED SAFE ENVIRONMENTS TO LEARN AND SUCCEED.

Around this goal, we are **united.**

Let's spread and amplify our work to  
achieve this goal and target.



## Partnering with the Ministry of Education to address violence in schools

As the **foremost entity** in charge of ensuring the mental, physical, moral, civic, and artistic development of every student, **the Ministry of Education plays a pivotal role in the prevention of and response to violence against children.**

Addressing violence in schools is critical because learning environments are the places that make or break a country's human capital, and it is no secret that exposure to violence - whether physical, sexual, or emotional - will cripple the growth and development of our children to their full potential, defeating this purpose.

When children pursue and complete their education, especially secondary school, they, their family, and their community reap **lasting health and development benefits.** Sadly, many children do not go to school because they are exposed to violence and sexual abuse in the school environment.<sup>1</sup>

When schools are safe and violence-free, more children can **pursue their education** and become **well-rounded individuals.** Girls and women with higher education levels are often the ones that manage to delay their time of marriage and pregnancy and adopt healthy behaviors.<sup>2</sup>

Since the outbreak of the COVID crisis, an explosion of incidents of violence against children has been noted across the world.<sup>3</sup>

**Madagascar is no exception to this.** Indeed, the number of calls to the free 147 hotline for child abuse skyrocketed in 2020, increasing by more than 600% compared to previous years.<sup>4</sup>

# 600%

increase in the number of calls to  
the 147 hotline for child abuse

<sup>1</sup> High-Impact Practices in Family Planning (HIPs). (2014). Educating girls: creating a foundation for positive sexual and reproductive health behaviors.

<sup>2</sup> The Brookings Institute. (2014). Raising the global ambition for girls' education.

<sup>3</sup> Bhatia, A., et al. (2021). Violence against children during the COVID-19 pandemic. Bulletin of the World Health Organization, 99(10), 730-738.

<https://doi.org/10.2471/BLT.20.283051>

<sup>4</sup> UNFPA (2020b), "Rapport d'enquête de perception. Evaluation rapide des impacts de la COVID-19 chez les jeunes et les adolescents à Madagascar." August 2020.

## A **coordinated effort** to address violence in schools

Violence in schools is a complex issue that involves **individuals and institutions at many levels**, i.e., students and their parents and community; school staff; and the authorities. All three parties have their own priorities in ensuring that schools remain safe and free of violence.

Unless **students** are aware that violence is not okay, they cannot be expected to protect themselves.

Unless **teachers** receive training on positive discipline, they will not realize that there are more efficient ways of teaching.

Unless the **authorities** issue laws that prohibit violence in schools, any violent school teacher or staff cannot be held accountable for their actions.

**Therefore, to be successful, addressing violence in schools needs to be a coordinated effort.**

## What do our school communities think?

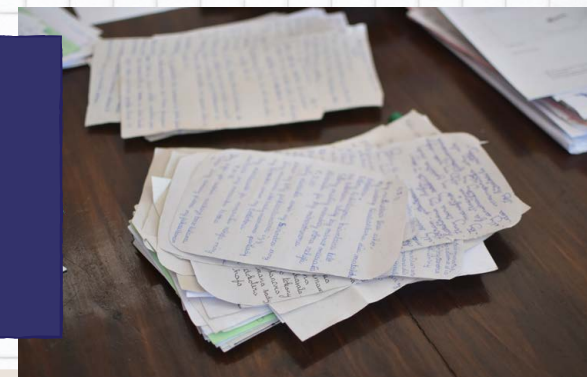
In 2022, NGO *Projet Jeune Leader (PJL)* created and circulated magazines for their local partner communities in the Haute Matsiatra, Amoron'i Mania, Vakinankaratra regions around key "hot topics" related to youth and their health.

Magazine readers – youth, parents, community members – wrote back their ideas and opinions through **8,498 paper comments**, which the *Projet Jeune Leader* team then collected and analyzed.

This magazine summarizes our **communities' ideas to prevent and respond to violence in our schools**.

# 434

comments received related to the topic of violence



### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **School-based violence remains a prevalent issue in Madagascar.** Constituents perceive there is a lack of awareness about what constitutes violence, a culture of violence towards students, and a lack of policy or legal protections.
- **Activities aimed at preventing violence do not need to be time-consuming or costly.** Many of the constituents' recommendations can be put in place with a reasonable effort or may already be in place as part of other initiatives.

## What are our school communities saying about the problem of violence?

"Here at the middle school there are still problems; there are some **teachers who twist ears**, and at the elementary school there are **teachers that kick students.**"

(Student, Vakinankaratra)

"The reason there are incidents of violence in educational settings is because of **a lack of guidelines and policies** set by the school authorities, **a lack of respect** between Educators and students, and lack of respect between students and their peers."

(Student, Haute Matsiatra)

"Some educators don't think it through, because they think [using violence] is good, but it **harms the future of the country and violates human rights.**"

(Student, Vakinankaratra)

"Here in our community there are teachers that use physical violence on students like making them kneel on small rocks; they use hurtful language and bully those who don't have enough school supplies. **We ask, with all due respect, that teachers don't use violence on us – physical violence or bullying.**"

(Student, Vakinankaratra)

"[There's violence] because educators **believe** that punishments and hitting will change the students. We are setting up a group to **teach new teachers to have better and quality teaching.**"

(Teacher, Amoron'i Mania)

"[There is violence] because there is **a lack of respect** for one another and **we don't think "men and women have equal rights."** Every school should add a PJJ Educator...in my course with them I get advice about [violence]... Thanks to PJJ for the education."

(Student, Vakinankaratra)

"We see a lot of violence in our schools because **teachers have not gone through training** – they just automatically become teachers. **Here in the rural areas, you see that a lot.** The fix: Give them **training** about what they should be cautious of around kids, inform them about what they might encounter with children (naughty behaviors, being distracted, etc.) and give them the solutions for it."

(Teacher, Amoron'i Mania)

"When Educators do not know how to **respect the rights of children**, then they use violence with students...Our school does not encourage students and parents to **report incidents of violence**... [We should] create a space to exchange ideas [about violence prevention] in every class."

(Student, Haute Matsiatra)

"The widespread violence we see in our schools is caused by **teachers flirting with and hitting on students.**"

(Student, Vakinankaratra)

# 58%

of students in Madagascar have experienced violence in school!

<sup>1</sup> Ministère de la Population, de la Protection Sociale et de la Promotion de la Femme (MPPSPF), Instat, & UNICEF Madagascar. (2019). Etude sur les violences envers les enfants à Madagascar



# THE MINISTRY IN ACTION

**The Ministry of Education has already taken important steps to provide safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all.**

The Ministry of Education condemns physical discipline in schools with Article 11 of Memorandum #5246-96 (1996) and Memorandum #234/MEN/SG (2017).

We can ensure that all students access inclusive and equitable quality education by **revamping this declaration** to include explicit reference to sexual and emotional violence within schools.

We can **use existing communication channels** within the Ministry of Education, as well as **social media and the press**, to ensure the declaration is made accessible and available to all teachers, principals, and school authorities.



## What do our school communities think?

"Other ways that our schools can ensure the protection of students from being exposed to violence are to **establish rules that ensure men and women have equal rights** and immediately **prosecute those that use violence** against students."  
(Student, Vakinankaratra)

"There is not yet a **safe and secure way** for students to [report violence] in our school. Another way that the school should ensure the protection of students from violence is there should be a **person responsible** for this in the school, or in the community where the school is located, and there should be **laws and rules** for those caught committing violence."  
(Teacher, Amoron'i Mania)

"One other way your school can ensure students are protected from violence is to **prohibit the use of violence in schools** – whether it is physical, cognitive, or emotional. For example, teachers might discriminate, and that's already a form of violence."  
(Student, Haute Matsiatra)

"Easy solutions to prevent violence in schools: There should be **guidelines for both students and teachers**; if there is an incident, then everyone needs to take responsibility. Students **have the right** to tell their parents if the teacher is doing something wrong, just like the teacher has the right to tell the parents if the student is doing something wrong."  
(Parent, Haute Matsiatra)

"Other ways schools can prevent violence is to work with associations and groups who work on violence prevention... **The law [should] protect against physical, emotional, sexual, and mental violence.** Especially prevent sexual violence because today, many are victims of sexual violence."  
(Student, Vakinankaratra).

## THOUGHTS INTO ACTION

Condemn not only physical, but also sexual and emotional violence within schools through an updated Memorandum this school year to ensure that every student can reach their fullest mental, physical, moral, civic, and artistic potential.



# SCHOOLS IN ACTION

**Schools have an important role in protecting children. Our schools are meant to promote children’s dignity, development, and protection.**

We can amplify the successes of the school governing bodies “**Renewed Efforts for the Development of Basic Education**” by integrating violence and prevention strategies into their mandate for ensuring quality education. Our financial partners know this issue is key to achieving SDG 4 and should be ready to support our efforts.

**Important and impactful activities that the Ministry can support governing bodies to integrate include:**

- Working with their teachers, families, and communities to **access appropriate training and support** on positive forms of discipline.
- Developing **school rules and guidelines** to implement the Ministry of Education’s policy prohibiting violence.
- Establishing and enforcing **disciplinary procedures** for perpetrators.

To monitor our achievements, we can include an indicator in the Education Management Information System to see what proportion of our schools have a policy against all forms of violence.

## What do our school communities think?

“Our school strongly encourages students and parents to report violence. Violence is never acceptable anywhere. Especially at school... My suggestion is: it depends on the way you teachers **communicate** with one another at school and how you **control and communicate positively with the students**. Add in **guidance from parents** at home, and we can protect students from violence.”  
(Parent, Amoron’i Mania)

“Educators should have a more open and broad relationship with their students. They should strive to give complete and clear explanations to their students and give students a platform to say when they don’t understand something. **Educators should not use insults, intimidating and hateful language with their students.**”  
(Student, Vakinankaratra)

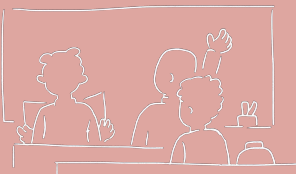
“The way to prevent violence **rests with the teachers**: they should educate the children, as it should be, but not discriminate against or belittle them, or use harsh words that hurt them.”  
(Student, Amoron’i Mania)

“What can be done to fix this is to **inform both educators and students** that there are harmful effects of violence, whether physical or mental, or especially emotional... Other ways our school can ensure that students are protected from violence are: set **classroom rules**, set clear and non-discriminatory **expectations** for all students, set **goals (guidelines)** at the beginning of the year.”  
(Student, Haute Matsiatra)

“Other ways schools can ensure students are protected from violence is to have teachers **teach life skills** to students, implement **school rules to prevent violence**, and strengthen the **training of teachers** on how to properly discipline students. Procedures should also be put in place for students and parents to **report incidents of violence without worrying about confidentiality.**”  
(Parent, Haute Matsiatra)

## THOUGHTS INTO ACTION ↓

**Integrate violence and prevention strategies and capacity building into the mandate of “Renewed Efforts for the Development of Basic Education” groups, building on their successes in ensuring quality education for students in even the most rural areas.**



# STUDENTS IN ACTION

**Curriculum-based life skills and sexuality education that are delivered by a trained and supported specialized Educator in schools** are one of the most impactful and cost-effective ways to **prevent violence** against children, now and in their future lives.<sup>1</sup>

There is a strong body of evidence – both internationally and in Madagascar – that this type of curriculum-based education developed by a trained and competent Educator can:

- ✓ Develop children’s **life skills** and promote **equal relationships**
- ✓ Teach children about **safe behaviors** and **protecting themselves** from abuse
- ✓ Challenge and transform **social and gender norms** that justify violence



## A solution by and for Malagasy youth

Since 2013, the NGO **Projet Jeune Leader** has worked with Madagascar’s Ministry of Education to put **specialized Educators to deliver a life skills and sexuality education curriculum in public middle schools**, with some exciting impacts, like these:

- After the school year, students with a Projet Jeune Leader-trained Educator and curriculum showed **improved attitudes towards healthy relationships**, while comparison students who did not have the Educator or curriculum showed no change.
- Students were **more likely to know where to seek help** if they experienced violence if they had a school year with the Projet Jeune Leader Educator and curriculum.<sup>2</sup>

Dedicated to achieving our common vision of all students that are empowered, responsible, and contributing citizens, the Ministry of Education and NGO **Projet Jeune Leader** have been working to scale up this approach since 2020, including **integrating the curriculum and Educator specialization training into a regional teacher pre-service training school in Haute Matsiatra in 2022.**

“The Ministry and Projet Jeune Leader already have an agreement regarding the implementation of [Comprehensive Sexuality Education], so what we did today in Mahazengy Fianarantsoa is part of the implementation strategy. This workshop marks the **introduction of Comprehensive Sexuality Education [CSE] into the public system through the training of teachers**. We used this approach to **accelerate the scale-up of CSE**, given that it’s those teachers trained at Centre Régional de l’Institut National de Formation Pédagogique (CRNFP) that will be spread out across communities and schools to provide CSE to the students.”  
(Téophil RABENANDRASANA, DGES, Ministère de l’Education Nationale)

← **Members of the Projet Jeune Leader team with the DGES and CRINFP Mahazengy.**

<sup>1</sup> UNESCO and UN Women. (2016). *Global guidance on addressing school-related gender-based violence*; World Health Organization. (2019). *School-based violence prevention: a practical handbook*.

<sup>2</sup> Quasi-experimental program outcome evaluation with a non-equivalent comparison group pretest-posttest design (n = 1,213), 2018-2019 school year

## What do our school communities think?

"According to my child that studies at the middle school, the PJJ Educator **teaches all about violence and how to fight it**. Schools should monitor all children, and it should start at the household – **giving information to parents**, like those workshops (for parents) led by the PJJ Educator."

(Parent, Vakinankaratra)

"Violence is a big problem for students and it causes them a lot of distress. They should be **taught how to protect themselves** in case they suddenly experience a case of violence. They should be **taught how to interact with a trusted adult**, like those authorities closest to them.

(Parent, Vakinankaratra)

"Put "Projet Jeune Leader" [in schools] to protect students from violence, to **teach students about assertive communication, to inform students about the laws regarding violence.**"

(Parent, Haute Matsiatra)

"Yes, our school encourages students and parents to report violence because **our PJJ Educator has taught us this**. We have also been **informed about what to do** if you are a victim of violence or see a case of violence: Reach out to a trusted adult. Other ways our school can ensure that students are safe from violence is to **hire trusted adults** to protect them from violence, approach Projet Jeune Leader, and establish **rules of conduct** between students and teachers."

(Student, Amoron'i Mania)

"Bring the teachers together, the Government sends "Projet Jeune Leader" so teachers better know how to work with students. Our school encourages students and parents to avoid violence because there is now a PJJ Educator that **specializes in this and gives advice to everyone**. Another way we can protect students from violence is to call together all parents and teachers to learn from the PJJ Educator so that **parents can effectively advise their children and teachers are better at educating** and can facilitate protection from violence."

(Student, Amoron'i Mania)



## "Educators, not punishers"

Mr. Fetra was on his way to school when the sound of an old television caught his attention. He immediately recognized the song that the national television was broadcasting and the voice of the duet that would follow the strumming of the guitar. He paused and listened in.

*"The bell is ringing, the class begins..."* 🎵

Mr. Fetra took the song he heard along the way as an encouragement from above. He was nervous today: **the parents' association, school officers, and teachers were meeting to decide the new school policy**. Mr. Fetra was in charge of facilitating the meeting.

As the meeting got underway, Mr. Fetra was still nervous, but he remembered the song on the television that had inspired him earlier that day. He thought to himself, "I have to stand strong... I have to do what is right."

And so, in the middle of the meeting, Mr. Fetra stood up. In the middle of the crowd, he declared that the current student punishment system was inappropriate -- challenging the majority of the school staff and students' parents. **He had insisted that it was not okay to use physical or verbal violence on the students.**

The room drowned in a buzz as teachers and parents hurried to shout

## THOUGHTS INTO ACTION ↓

Continue to expand and integrate curriculum-based life skills and sexuality education delivered by a specialized Educator with dedicated human resources in the 2023 National Education Strategic Plan, for an impactful and cost-effective means to prevent violence against our children.



their protests and views on the matter. Some argued that that was always the way education was conducted. That was the collective experience of all schoolchildren and they turned out all right. Why the sudden need for change? Some even claimed that was the Malagasy way of educating children!

However, Mr. Fetra stood his ground.

"Those kids are the adults of tomorrow," he said with force. **"We need to foster them, not damage them.** I agree that they need discipline and structure, but we need to find other ways, positive ways. They are like buds -- no bud grows into a fruit if you slap and pour acid on it. When your crops sprout, what do you do? You water them, keep them in the shade, put in some fertilizer, keep diseases and pests away. Why should we act differently with our very own children, our offspring, the flesh of our flesh? Aren't they more precious to us than those crops? I would like to highlight that our job as teachers is to educate not punish."

"Let me say that again, our job is to **educate** not **punish!**" emphasized Mr. Fetra.

To Mr. Fetra's surprise, the principal stood up. "I support you and I agree," the principal said. "As you said, physical and emotional punishment is not a good way to change bad behavior. In fact, it shows children that violence against others is acceptable. **When students are disciplined in a positive and non-violent ways, they learn that conflict can be resolved with respect.** I believe our past ways of punishing students have been harmful to understanding and trust in our school community."

The buzzing in the room took off again, but this time in a different direction. To Mr. Fetra's further surprise, ultimately, the meeting concluded with a decision to come together again the following week to agree on a new school disciplinary policy.

**Mr. Fetra's determination to teach differently did not come by chance, it was rooted in his life experience.** As a child, Fetra once had a violent teacher.



He and his classmates seldom dared to raise their hands to answer questions because if they ever got it wrong, the teacher would hit them with the ruler or berate them harshly. In this teacher's eyes, students fell in two categories. Those who had adequate supplies and got good grades were well taken care of. On the other hand, those in difficulty, whether in terms of school supplies or performance, barely existed in the classroom.

**Fetra happened to feature in the first category** because his parents made his education a priority even though they were no better-off than most regular people in their village. His dad held back on his hobbies and his mom sold crops at the market so they could afford adequate school supplies for him and his younger siblings. His parents always told the kids to finish their homework before playing or doing chores.

**His classmate, Lesabotsy, on the other hand, sadly fell in the second category.** Things were grim at home and school did not inspire any better prospects in his heart or mind but made things even worse.

Fetra never forgot how Lesabotsy's cheeks went deep red with shame as he hurried to slip back his battered schoolbook in his school bag. How distress filled his eyes when he realized the teacher did not know even his name. How he tiptoed to the back of the room, to the bench by the door, when he understood he did not matter in class.

Young Fetra always racked his mind on a way to help him. But they were both kids, what could he actually do? **Lesabotsy frequently skipped school that year and the following year, he did not show up.** It appeared that Fetra was the only one to notice his absence and this saddened him further.

He promised himself he would become a teacher someday and would use a different teaching approach -- he would correct without punishing, speak respectfully instead of scolding, guide instead of berating, offer support not criticism, seek agreements with students instead of ordering them around, and **he would never, ever beat them up or use any form of violence against them.**

**A** week after the meeting, the parents' association, school officers, and teachers came together again and they wrote and approved a new school

**"Physical and emotional punishment is not a good way to change bad behavior. In fact, it shows children that violence against others is acceptable."**

policy that **prohibited all forms of harassment and violence**, while setting a clear process for discipline.

“Discipline, not punishments,” as Mr. Fetra

underlined. The policy also emphasized the **training of teachers** in positive discipline methods. It

established a **safe and confidential reporting system** (that all learners and teachers are aware of) for incidents of violence. And lastly, a method for learners and parents to **report incidents of violence confidentially and without fear** was implemented. Mr. Fetra had never felt so proud.

**“Discipline, not punishments.”**

**A**t the end of the meeting, a person lingered at the door.

“Fetra?”

Mr. Fetra looked up. His eyes widened. Could this be his childhood friend Lesabotsy? Twenty years later?

**“It’s really you, Lesabotsy!”** Fetra said with shock as he extended his hand. “I didn’t know you lived here now!”

“Yes, I live here, and my son Dimby is in seventh grade here at the school,” shared Lesabotsy.

“Dimby? He is my student! I teach seventh grade.”

Lesabotsy’s jaw dropped. **“Oh, Dimby is so lucky to have a teacher like you,”**

Lesabotsy said, folding both of his hands over Mr. Fetra’s. Both were overtaken with emotion and could not find any more words to say.

Mr. Fetra felt like a load of bricks had been lifted off his shoulders. As he said goodbye to Lesabotsy, he promised himself he would give Dimby what he wished he could have given Lesabotsy decades ago -- **a safe and violence-free school environment, a place to thrive and learn comfortably, a place of care and support and guidance, and a sense of trust...**

In this way, he knew that the school could help curb the number of children dropping out and give rise to a next generation of well-rounded adults.



The Pass it On! magazines are designed to gather and respond to **invaluable insights from communities** on their experiences and values with youth health policy and programs.



Combined with **strong leadership** and **evidence-based initiatives**, we believe we can create the greatest impact for our children to grow up into healthy, happy, and well-rounded adults.

## LEARN MORE

Projet Jeune Leader believes that to be effective, programs and policies need to respond to communities’ knowledge and feedback. To see more constituents’ feedback, get more information about impactful approaches for youth health policy and programming in Madagascar, AND to give your own feedback, visit:

<https://fr.projetjeuneleader.org/ressources>



Our schools are very nice schools  
There has never been violence  
Those both big and small know how to respect  
one other  
Violence will never be seen  
There is no struggle and no corruption  
Everyone is peaceful and calm!  
No discrimination between the poor and the rich  
They are received as the same  
No one is considered dirty, nor miscolored  
But together we rejoice and are happy  
There are no lesser children or greater children  
They are all the same in the view of educators  
No one is considered behind or ahead  
But they are viewed as one child!  
We all know how to respect each other  
And that is far from using violence  
Respecting one another and raised similarly  
Far from violence, our hearts connected  
A model school free of violence  
And one where we all want to learn.

Poem by Anselme, "Le Gamin Noir", Youth  
Leader from Fianarantsoa



**ENSURING INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY  
EDUCATION AND PROMOTING LIFELONG  
LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL.**