

ISSUE 1 - 2022

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

**A COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION  
FOR WELL-ROUNDED YOUTH**

**IN SUPPORT OF SDG4.** →

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

**4** QUALITY EDUCATION



# A COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE

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

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

## Growing up is not easy in today's changing world.

Imagine if we didn't have accurate information and reliable skills to navigate the journey to adulthood... Many young people end up relying on what friends say, the media, television, or the internet -- information that may be unreliable and not necessarily true.

That is why it is important to provide **comprehensive education in middle schools** to teach young people about:

- ✓ Taking responsibility
- ✓ Setting clear goals in life and knowing the steps to achieve them
- ✓ Discerning right from wrong
- ✓ Making mature decisions and sticking to them
- ✓ Growing up safely and in good health
- ✓ Contributing to peaceful, prosperous communities

**A COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION** is not solely focused on imparting knowledge.

**It also builds life skills and fosters holistic development.**

Education about puberty, positive behaviors, healthy relationships, and sexuality are a part of this comprehensive education to **help children become responsible adults.**

## On top of that...

- 💡 It is adapted to the age and developmental stage of the children
- 💡 It is based on evidence
- 💡 It involves collaboration with other educators in the community

**...effectively helping children become well-rounded adults.**

Preparing to build a home and raise the next future generation always goes hand in hand with knowledge, self-confidence, and setting goals for life and a bright future. They are inseparable.

When young people have sufficient knowledge, useful skills, and clear goals and know which path they want to take...

...they are able to make decisions that are right for their health and growth and they are able to take necessary precautions...

...until they arrive at the right time and place to start their family.

When youth benefit from a comprehensive education, they become **well-rounded individuals**.

When households are started by these well-rounded adults, their families and children have a head-start for **positive health and well-being**, and can further contribute to the **development** of their communities.

When individuals access **voluntary family planning**, the benefits ripple through families and communities, and across society and generations.

**This contributes to a more prosperous nation where every single person can have a happy life and family.**

## 5 Minutes for Education on Life Skills and Politeness

### A step in the right direction

The Ministry of Education realizes the importance and necessity of educating children to become well-rounded citizens and therefore providing them with a comprehensive education. As such, on September 21, 2021, the Ministry issued a memorandum that put all public school teachers in charge of education on life skills and politeness.

- **This education is for 5 minutes,** to be provided at the beginning of the school day in primary schools and at the beginning of every class in secondary schools.
- **All teachers take part in this program.** A timetable was established to that end. Whether they teach history or languages or physical education or any other subject, all teachers are designated to teach life skills and politeness.
- **In each school year, 25 topics are to be addressed.** Students are scheduled to be assessed after every 5 topics. Reproductive health, an essential topic for Malagasy youth and their futures, is one of those 25 topics scheduled for 5 minutes.

## 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 in total**, which the *Projet Jeune Leader* team then collected and analyzed.

One of the magazines discussed the "**5 Minutes**" program and invited constituents to share their opinions on the program and make suggestions if they had any. This magazine summarizes those comments.



# 1,210

comments received on the topic of life skills and the "5 Minutes" program

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **There is strong support amongst constituents for integrating life skills education in public schools.** The "5 Minutes" program by the Ministry of Education has strong support and is seen as contributing to the positive development of youth and communities.
- Seeing the value of the "5 Minutes" program, constituents hope to see the effort expanded by **making life skills and comprehensive sexuality education into a standalone course taught by a dedicated teacher.**

## FEEDBACK FROM COMMUNITIES

### A popular program with many benefits

Overwhelmingly, we heard strong support for the "5 Minutes for Education on Life Skills and Politeness" initiative. **Nearly 100% of the constituents** who wrote to us said they were really happy and appreciated that the Ministry had introduced this subject in school!

## What do our school communities think?

"We are **deeply thankful** to the teacher for the lessons they taught us."  
(Student, Vakinankaratra)

"It is a good thing that schools are teaching this subject. It **opens children's minds** and ensures them a **bright future.**"  
(Parent, Amoron'i Mania)

"I had the subject on life skills and politeness. Personally, I loved it, it was wonderful; I also **needed to hear that to live a better life.**"  
(Student, Vakinankaratra)

"Our child is really **well behaved**, the teachers have taught them about politeness. They also put a lot of **effort in their studies** and **get along well** with other people."  
(Parent, Haute Matsiatra)

"I have heard of the subject on politeness. How do I feel about it? I know that my child is now **very polite within the community** – they remember to greet people when meeting them and to say thank you. They have become very polite since they have been taking the subject at school."  
(Parent, Haute Matsiatra)

"I have taught the subject, although not at the beginning of every class; I taught it to the 8th graders only and not that often. I feel that the kids really need that subject. [...] It makes students realize the **things they should and should not do.**"  
(Teacher, Haute Matsiatra)

"It would be nice not to remove the teaching of politeness and life skills in school because it really helps **improve student behavior.**"  
(Teacher, Vakinankaratra)

In addition to giving **extremely positive feedback** on the “5-Minutes” program for education on life skills and politeness in schools, readers also gave **suggestions for how the effort could be further reinforced**. In the following pages, we share their ideas and feedback.



The overall, strongest message we heard from constituents was to **institute life skills and comprehensive sexuality education as a standalone course**. By doing so, the Ministry can better achieve the original intent of “5 Minutes for Education on Life Skills and Politeness” effort, which as shared by constituents is **encouraging but insufficient**.



## OPPORTUNITY

### A Dedicated Teacher and a Standalone Course

In their comments, constituents highlighted the potential need for a dedicated teacher and standalone course to deliver life skills education. They suggested this because:

- ✓ It would remove the need to coordinate the teaching across multiple teachers, **improving cohesiveness** in the curriculum.
- ✓ It would ensure that all topics are addressed with the **needed breadth and depth** by blocking a full course for the subject and having a single person in charge.
- ✓ It would **avoid putting the responsibility on teachers who may not have the training and skills** to address these topics, or the time in their current curriculum workload to achieve the required frequency and effort.

#### Readers want to see more time and human resources invested in the subject.

"I think the kids really need this subject; however, I am afraid **teaching it at the beginning of every class would be too much**."  
(Teacher, Amoron'i Mania)

"In our opinion, the subject should ideally be taught in public schools by **a single teacher that specializes** in teaching about puberty and educating adolescents."  
(Student, Haute Matsiatra)

"It would be good to have **one teacher dedicated to teaching puberty** and raising youth in all government schools."  
(Parent, Vakinankaratra)

"As parents, we want even more education about life skills and politeness in schools. **Time should be dedicated** to teaching this to youth now-a-days, for example, once a week, maybe even **a standalone course**."  
(Parent, Haute Matsiatra)

## OPPORTUNITY

### Expanded Curriculum and More Time

Comments from constituents suggested that **the current 5-minute window could be expanded** so that essential content can be fully covered and the future and well-being of the students further promoted with more rigor.



#### Students, parents, and teachers say this subject deserves a dedicated space in students' timetables.

"The time slot is a constraint as **five minutes is not enough** for the teacher to reinforce the message."

(Teacher, Vakinankaratra)

"Teaching politeness to youth requires **repetition.**"

(Parent, Amoron'i Mania)

"It is still not enough because the teacher **needs to repeat and reinforce** the message with the students."

(Teacher, Vakinankaratra)

"[Our teacher] exceeds the five minutes, and **we love to listen, plus, it builds our knowledge.**"

(Student, Amoron'i Mania)

"Some of the teachers do not restrict themselves to the five minutes when they have something to explain to us and want to teach us about our behavior and life skills to **help us make good decisions and get along better with others**; what they have to say is often **very eye-opening.**"

(Student, Haute Matsiatra)

## CHALLENGE

### Misunderstandings and Unintended Impacts

As it is currently implemented, the 5-minute program presents the risk that some teachers, although well-meaning, will **misunderstand the intent of the subject.**

This further reinforces the opportunity of establishing a dedicated teacher and standalone course, as this would allow for:

- ✓ Improved **training** of these specialized educators
- ✓ Improved **alignment** between the intended objectives and actual implementation of the curriculum.

#### Community comments show that many teachers only use the 5 minutes to warn or reprimand students, not to teach life skills.

"They are taught how to **properly behave in a society**, e.g., not stealing, not making fun of friends, and also politeness: being present to the person talking, listening, accepting, and doing it. They are also taught about respect, how they need to raise their hand and **wait to be allowed to speak before doing so**, when they have an opinion to share."

(Teacher, Haute Matsiatra)

"I never miss an opportunity to send out some messages and **admonish them** even though we have **only a short time** before the lesson or if it is **unrelated** to the subject I teach."

(Teacher, Vakinankaratra)

"If any child acts rude or demonstrates **bad behavior** in the classroom, the class is **immediately taught** and provided guidance in that respect."

(Teacher, Haute Matsiatra)

"I do not really see it as teaching, more like admonishing them about life. I gave them sermons about greeting others, how to behave when in a classroom/ community setting that involves many people, how to request to speak and how to actively listen to others in the classroom or at home."

(Teacher, Amoron'i Mania)

So we hear this feedback and ask:

How can we build on the popularity of the “5 Minutes for Education on Life Skills and Politeness” program and

**TAKE IT A STEP FURTHER?**

The Ministry of Education and the NGO Projet Jeune Leader (PJL) are actually already working on it! Their collaboration is a promising avenue to take the Ministry’s existing efforts a step forward to reach our common goal of comprehensive, high-quality, inclusive education for Madagascar’s youth.



Teachers-in-training from the CRINFP Mahazengy during their comprehensive sexuality education training with Projet Jeune Leader in 2022 to prepare them to be specialized educators in Haute Matsiatra region.



### A fruitful collaboration for Madagascar’s youth

In collaboration with the NGO Projet Jeune Leader, the Institut National de Formation Pédagogique (INFP) and the National Ministry of Education are engaging teachers-in-training (destined for middle schools) at the Centre Régional (CRINFP) Mahazengy to implement comprehensive sexuality education in public rural schools (zone 2 and 3) in the Haute Matsiatra region.

This is an exciting program that aims to provide high-quality, rigorous, complete life skills education to Malagasy adolescents in order to support their growth and success. To achieve these goals, the program implemented by the teachers-in-training includes the following core components:



**Sexuality education classes** timetabled in students’ schedules. Each class follows a 27-unit life skills curriculum which is adapted to the ages of the students.



**Workshops for parents** about adolescent health and development and effective adolescent-parent communication.



**Individualized support to adolescents** including confidential, one-on-one counseling and advising sessions and enriching afterschool activities.

## A Comprehensive Curriculum, A Standalone Course, A Specialized Educator

PJL and its Ministry of Education partners **train and support specialized educators** in public middle schools. These educators' sole task is to teach **comprehensive sexuality education** to the students, as part of a **standalone course**.

The education provided is holistic: students acquire knowledge on health, leadership, peaceful and safe relationships, and more critical topics, **AND** they develop the life skills that will help them make and stick to good decisions – **all the foundation for a healthy and bright future**.

- ✓ In this way, this comprehensive sexuality education program meets students' and parents' requests for more life skills in the school system.
- ✓ It also addresses many of the challenges that we heard from constituents, such as the need for specialized educators and the need for longer and repeated content.



## SEXUALITY EDUCATION: Immediate and life-long benefits

### 40%

of girls in Madagascar are married before their 18th birthday and 13% before the age of 15. This is the 15th highest prevalence of child marriage globally.

### 31%

of girls 15-19 years old have already begun their reproductive life.

Most of the time, early marriage and pregnancy lead young girls to drop out of school, restricting their future prospects and exposing them to a number of risks, including gender-based violence.

**Sexuality education helps both girls and boys take charge of their sexual and reproductive health and become well-rounded individuals by:**

- providing them with the **KNOWLEDGE** needed to make informed choices
- developing their **SELF-CONFIDENCE** to set life goals and make healthy decisions that can help them achieve those goals
- building their **AGENCY** so they may have the means to achieve their goals

All statistics from Institut National de la Statistique (INSTAT) et ICF. Enquête Démographique et de Santé À Madagascar, 2021: Indicateurs Clés. 2021.

## Benefitting Entire Communities

In addition to meeting the wishes of local constituents for expanded life skills education, PJJ's comprehensive sexuality education approach brings a multitude of benefits.

A Ministry-approved impact assessment of our comprehensive sexuality education programming **found that effects extend beyond direct student sexuality knowledge and behaviors.\***

The lives of students, their parents, their schools, their communities, and broader structural issues **all benefited from this education**, as shown in the diagram:

*\*"Exploring the Multi-Level Impacts of a Youth-led Comprehensive Sexuality Education Model in Madagascar Using Human-Centered Design Methods", A qualitative evaluation employing human-centered design methodologies with principals of PJJ's partner schools 2020-2021 (n=90) and 2021-2022 (n=50). Study led in collaboration with researchers from the University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health.*



**STUDENTS' LIVES**

- Increased capacity to leverage support from trusted adult
- Increased responsibility-taking
- Improved behavior
- Improved performance at school
- Increased commitment to their education
- Improved emotional management skills
- Increased knowledge on sexual and reproductive health
- Improved problem-solving skills
- Increased self-motivation and self-confidence

**HOUSEHOLD**

- Improved relationship with family
- Increased opportunities for special training and education
- Increased open-mindedness
- Increased willingness to take responsibility at school

**SCHOOL**

- Lower adolescent pregnancy rate at school
- Improved status of school
- Improved environment
- Increased effectiveness of teachers

**COMMUNITY AT LARGE**

- Students share their knowledge with community.
- The Malagasy culture is promoted.
- Prevention of drug abuse and violence within the community is facilitated.
- Students have role models.
- Relationships within the community improve

"If it was up to us, we would maintain [sexuality] education because **youth and children really need it** to become well-rounded adults, to be healthy, and to live freely. It also ensures their children one day become **well-rounded people** as well."  
(Parent, Amoron'i Mania)

"When youth are intellectually educated and receive sexuality education, they **know what they need to do** and they are **capable of making decisions** for their future."  
(Parent, Vakinankaratra)

"I noted that students who had sexuality education **have no fear** regarding the changes that their bodies undergo."  
(Teacher, Haute Matsiatra)

"In my opinion, the introduction of that form of sexuality education in schools is a great move because it **holistically builds the foundation of future generations** and helps youth have a **bright future.**"  
(Teacher, Amoron'i Mania)

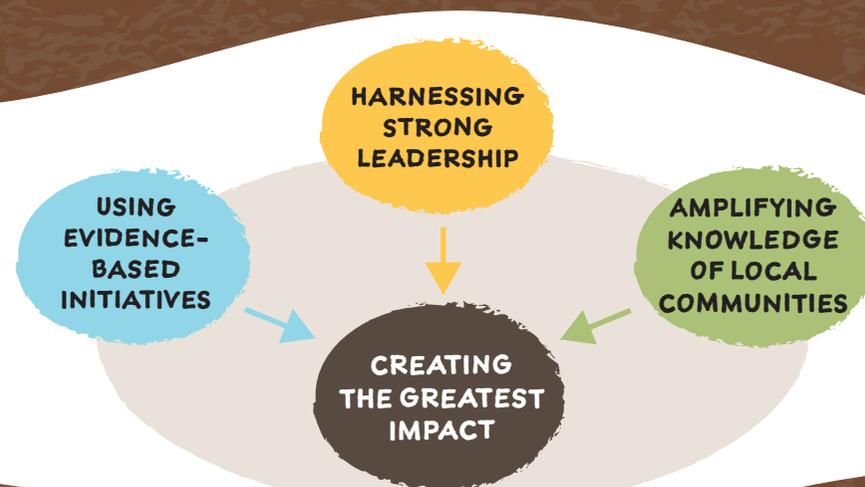
The Ministry's "5 Minutes" program has shown that there is **substantial local support and demand for life skills and sexuality education** in schools.

We can take what we have learned about this program and about PjL's comprehensive sexuality education program to bring even greater benefits to our youth and our communities.

## 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.

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>



Education that is done well,  
Considers the achievement of all.  
Educators are not born,  
They need conditions and guidance to  
work.

Education needs values,  
Not just done blindly to move on.  
Thought needs to be put in, from the words  
used,  
To behavior worthy of role models.

Share skills and experiences,  
And raise mentalities so that they do not  
flee.

Education is a shared task,  
Not only in the classroom.

Complete education nowadays  
Must include sexuality, so that  
All students understand their worth,  
They take care of their futures,  
And they succeed and achieve their goals.

Poem by Nasolo, Youth Leader from Antsirabe

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