

## RESOURCE

# Engaging teachers in supporting CSE: Projet Jeune Leader's lessons learned from a parallel teacher's program

### ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

We captured our lessons learned from delivering a special session for teachers in our partner schools in this document.



## About Projet Jeune Leader

PJL is a youth-founded, youth-led, and youth-centered nonprofit organization established in Fianarantsoa, Madagascar. Since 2013, Projet Jeune Leader has delivered comprehensive sexuality education to young and very young adolescents (ages 10-16) in Madagascar's public middle schools, partnering closely with schools and school districts. To do this, we recruit dynamic young adults (aged 18-25) for their positive gender attitudes and potential as role models, train them rigorously over two months, and hire them under a full-time, paid contract if they pass an end-of-training assessment. We then integrate each of them into a partner public school where they teach a year-long, time-tabled CSE course to multiple grades using our age-segmented, gender-transformative, 27-module curricula. When they are not teaching, educators provide a package of other essential services (enrichment activities, counseling, medical referrals, and programs for parents and teachers).

## About the Guidance Tool: *CSE We Can Count On*

Projet Jeune Leader has developed “CSE We Can Count On,” a publication sharing strategies, actionable guidance, and tools that we use in our work with tens of thousands of students, parents, teachers, and school officials in Madagascar to build and harness community support for in-school comprehensive sexuality education. This document, which accompanies the guidance tool, shares one of the resources that we use regularly.



Read “CSE We Can Count On” and accompanying resources at [www.projetjeuneleader.org/resources/community-support](http://www.projetjeuneleader.org/resources/community-support).

The uses and success of this resource are undeniably dependent on the context in which CSE is being delivered. Even so, we hope that it serves as a source of inspiration and creativity for others – civil society organizations, international non-governmental organizations, and even governments – committed to delivering in-school comprehensive sexuality education in their own contexts.

# Lessons Learned from a Special Session for Teachers during School Spirit Week

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## Summary

Projet Jeune Leader organized a special session specifically for teachers from partner public middle schools during national School Spirit Week in February 2021 to promote this important stakeholder group's understanding of the organization's activities and mission. The agenda included the simulation of a typical class, a discussion of the topics addressed by our curriculum, and a small training. In total, 938 teachers participated in our special session – an impressive participation rate of 78% of the teachers in our partner schools. A qualitative and quantitative evaluation provided evidence that as a result of the session, teachers 1) improved their understanding of Projet Jeune Leader's approach and impact; and, 2) showed new commitment to supporting the PjL Educators working in their school. Several lessons were also learned to further reinforce the impact of these sessions in the following school year. For instance, we found that it would be important to hold this type of session at the beginning of each school year in new partner middle schools to ensure that teachers become allies from the outset and, together in partnership with PjL Educators, help middle schoolers develop and thrive.

## Background

Teachers are one of our key stakeholders. When they understand the daily activities of the PjL Educators placed in their middle schools, they are in a better position to partner and support them, whether in regards to managing students, communicating with students' parents, or advocating for sex education in schools. However, PjL Educators do occasionally face teachers that doubt the value of their work and are reluctant to recognize them as members of the school staff. The underlying problems, as reported by the PjL Educators, are jealousy, misunderstanding of the organization's objectives, and misconceptions regarding sex education in schools. Therefore, to earn the trust of teachers from new partner middle schools from the outset and to address any misunderstandings that exist in current partner middle schools, Projet Jeune Leader piloted a new event during School Spirit Week.

## Overview of the sessions

During School Spirit Week in February 2021, the PJJ Educators placed in each of our 45 partner middle schools conducted a session dedicated for teachers. Every teacher was given an invitation two weeks prior to the scheduled date of the session.

The session lasted about two hours. We used the same agenda across all the schools:

1. Comprehensive explanation of Projet Jeune Leader
2. Simulation of Lesson #27 “*Seeking help and support from trusted adults*” from the Projet Jeune Leader curriculum for seventh graders. The PJJ Educator taught the lesson exactly as if the group of attending teachers were in seventh grade.
3. Small training on techniques for communication with adolescents.

## Evaluation methodology

- After the simulation, the PJJ Educators handed out a **survey form** to assess participants’ perceptions of Projet Jeune Leader. In total, 241 teachers answered the survey.
- The PJJ monitoring and evaluation team held **in-depth interviews** with randomly selected teachers. In total, six teachers were interviewed.
- A few Projet Jeune Leader staff passively **observed** sessions in different middle schools. Then, they conducted **interviews** with the PJJ Educator that facilitated the session, as well as a few teachers. The Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator and Program Assistant then **interviewed** the staff members within the two weeks following the observation session.
- They then **interviewed** the PJJ Educators within the two weeks following the event. In total, 45 PJJ Educators were interviewed either face-to-face or by phone.

## Results of the evaluation

The results of our qualitative and quantitative evaluations showed that the sessions for teachers resulted in positive changes.

1) [Teacher knowledge on PJJ’s approach and impact improved after they participated in the session led by PJJ Educators.](#)

In the survey results, **98%** of the teachers said that the topics taught by PJJ Educators **contribute to the education of middle schoolers and help them prepare their future well**. Only 1.6% of the teachers had no opinion on the matter and 0.4% disagreed.

During the in-depth follow-up interviews, the teachers explained that the class simulation and explanation of the topics included in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade curricula helped them better understand the activities and objectives of Projet Jeune Leader. **They explained that before, they did not really understand the impact of Projet Jeune Leader on students but now, they became convinced that students changed as a result of the PJJL classes.** As shared by one teacher interviewed:

*"In the past, many of us did not agree with the things that Projet Jeune Leader was teaching, in addition to the fact that parents were complaining that PJJL Educators were teaching inappropriate things to middle schoolers and were encouraging students to engage in improper sexual behaviors; but after this session, I clearly understand the activities and objectives of Projet Jeune Leader and I am now convinced that the matters you discuss and topics you teach to the middle schoolers are suitable."* (Ms. Jeanine, teacher at the Idanda middle school, Haute Matsiatra region)

## 2) The teachers demonstrated new commitment to supporting Projet Jeune Leader.

**First, the session encouraged teachers to join hands with PJJL Educators.** They expressed their support for the educator placed in their school.

*"You can count on us to help you with your activities with the students – for example, sports activities. I still stand ready to participate in your next activities."* (Mr. Louis, teacher at Fiadanana middle school, Amoron'i Mania region). Some teachers even directly approached the Jeune Leaders to express their desire to help them if needed: *"I found that the session convinced teachers such as Mr. Louis and Mr. Hery; I believe that they were truly convinced, and they approached me to tell me that they would help me in my activities at the school."* (PJJL Educator Hery, Fiadanana middle school, Amoron'i Mania region).

PJJL Educators also shared their hopes for upcoming collaborations with teachers. *"One of my expectations after this session is that the number of students who will come in for counseling will increase, since teachers will encourage them to come to me if they have a problem."* (PJJL Educator Naina, Fandriana middle school, Amoron'i Mania region); *"I also hope that, after this session, teachers will support and help me in my activities and will attend my classes."* (PJJL Educator Sitraka, Ilaka Centre middle school, Amoron'i Mania region).

**Secondly, the session sparked teachers' interest in the activities of the PJJL educators placed in their schools.** Several PJJL Educators reported that a few days after the session, for the first time, teachers came to visit the Youth Space and attend the classes and after-school activities conducted by PJJL Educators. *"I noticed changes; teachers have become very friendly towards me, and they actively visit the Youth Space. The School Monitor even came in to attend my classes when he was available."* (PJJL Educator Haingo, Ambalamahasoa middle school, Amoron'i Mania region). *"The School Monitor came in to*

*attend my class today, so I find that teachers are beginning to take interest in my activities."* (PJL Educator Safidy, Ambohibary middle school, Vakinankaratra region)

**Lastly, the session fostered respect and trust for the PJL Educators among teachers.** Teachers were able to observe their teaching capabilities and professional maturity as the PJL Educators facilitated the session, especially during the training and class simulation portions of the agenda. *"I used to have doubts regarding the PJL Educators' work but now I am persuaded of their qualities, and I am certain that, when they teach students, they are even more professional and effective than they were with us, teachers."* (School Director of Ambohimiadana middle school, Amoron'i Mania region). *"After this session, the professional reputation of the PJL Educators amongst teachers improved; they won the teachers' respect, and teachers are convinced that PJL Educators are highly skilled in education work and pedagogical techniques even though they are still very young compared to the teachers."* (Chrystian, PJL Regional Technical Officer in Amoron'i Mania region); *"At the Idanda middle school, even if the PJL educator is still very young compared to the teachers, the teachers respected the Jeune Leader and treated him like an adult and an expert in the field."* (Tahiry, PJL Program Assistant)

## Lessons learned and recommendations for the future

This special session for teachers proved so effective that we determined this activity should be repeated in following years in new partner middle schools. We also learned a few lessons to help us improve the impact of future sessions.

**More time should be invested in preparing PJL Educators to lead the session.** For most of the educators, this session was the first time they conducted a training intended for adults. Some still lacked self-confidence. As the Communications and Advocacy Officer of Projet Jeune Leader explained: *"I am unsure if the problem was that there was insufficient preparation time, or whether our educators aren't used to leading this kind of session, but I noticed during my observation visits that they lacked a bit self-confidence."* The PJL Educators also suggested giving instructions and the agenda for the session further in advance so that they have more time to prepare. They also noted that a specific training on how to lead trainings for adults would be helpful.

**The session should include a break, or should be shorter in length.** A few PJL Educators and staff members noted that some of the teachers were inactive and a bit distracted. Furthermore, some teachers did not stay for the full duration of the entire training. These issues could be addressed by including a short break: *"The truth is that many teachers do not have an attention span of two hours non-stop, so it is better to shorten it to one hour."* (PJL Educator Sedera, Ambohimanjaka middle school, Amoron'i Mania region); *"Some teachers were not really focused during the session, they said it was too long, so they were a bit passive."* (PJL Educator Sitraka, Ilaka Centre middle school, Amoron'i Mania region).

**Projet Jeune Leader should consider having the session facilitated by two PjL Educators.** We observed that when working on their own, the PjL Educators had a hard time filling moments of downtime during the training. One educator, Julie from the CEG Beheniy middle school in Vakinankaratra region, pointed out the same thing: *"It would be better if the session were facilitated by two or three educators, as it is a bit difficult to simultaneously manage the materials and the meeting."*

**The format of attendance sheets should be changed.** While observing the sessions, the Vakinankaratra Technical Officer noticed that the fact that teachers filled out individual attendance sheets led them to believe they would receive an allowance for participating. So, when they did not receive anything (the sessions were voluntary and unpaid), some came to think that the allowances had been misappropriated by Projet Jeune Leader or the School Director. As such, it would be better to replace the attendance sheet with a participant counting sheet that is filled, signed, and stamped by the school director.

**This session should be held at the beginning of the school year to optimize the benefits derived from it.** Since the objective of this session was to foster a better relationship between the PjL Educators and teachers, it would be better to hold it at the beginning of the school year to strengthen the bond from the outset in new partner middle schools.



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