

RESOURCE

Sample participatory activity to generate and synthesize local expertise on responding to resistance to CSE

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

Projet Jeune Leader used this participatory activity to engage key local gatekeepers – school principals – to understand their strategies for responding to common negative frames about CSE in their schools. We then synthesized their insights and expertise to develop simple advocacy tools that would minimize the barriers for other gatekeepers to act and respond to concerns about CSE in their own schools and communities.



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.

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.

Overview

Misunderstandings about the purpose and content CSE can fuel cases of opposition.

In Projet Jeune Leader's work, these misunderstandings are particularly common among teachers. Since school principals directly work with this potential source of opposition *and* are among our closest partners, we used this participatory activity to learn what strategies and arguments principals use to respond to isolated cases of resistance and backlash to CSE.

However, this activity can be used with other groups (CSE program staff, educators, youth, parents) to generate information about the negative frames that may surround CSE in the local context.

Activity Description

Two facilitators act out a scene in front of the group. The scene starts with one facilitator – pretending to be a CSE educator – teaching a lesson on reproduction to a class of students.

The facilitator can start by saying: “Today, we are going to talk about the science of reproduction: How is a baby made?”

At that moment, the second facilitator – acting as teacher – walks by the class and hears the CSE educator continuing the lesson: “...When a man and a woman have sex, the man puts his erect penis in the woman's vagina.”

The teacher is shocked and distraught to hear this! They immediately run to the principal's office. “Principal!” the teacher exclaims. “I just walked by the CSE educator's class and I heard that...!” The scene ends.

The facilitators then divide the group into pairs and asks them to discuss how they would respond to the teacher if they were in the place of the principal.

After each pair has had a time to discuss, ask for volunteers to share their ideas with the entire group. The facilitator should take notes on a board or flipchart. Continue the discussion until no new ideas are shared.

In closing the activity, the facilitators should summarize the ideas shared by participants ("If I understand correctly ...", "So, I notice that ...", "I learned that ..."). This will ensure that their interpretation is correct, and that there are no other lingering thoughts.

Using the Activity Results

After the activity, the CSE program staff can review the ideas shared on how to respond to a potential case of opposition, identifying any themes that emerge. Some things to consider when reviewing the ideas are:

- Are there natural communication opportunities (language or metaphors) that can help advance support for CSE in the local context? If so, how can we strengthen and amplify these messages in our program and among partners?
- Is the dominant conversation or talking points at odds with how we would defend the CSE program? If so, how can we shift the conversation to be more helpful?
- What are the best practices we can share across partners? How can we minimize the barriers for people to use the positive language, metaphors, and messages in response to CSE resistance in the local context?

Projet Jeune Leader's Experience

After reviewing the results from this activity, the Projet Jeune Leader team identified three common strategies principals already use to deal with opposing teachers:

1. Explain the problem and how the CSE program responds
 - "Show the statistics of the kids who get pregnant and the kids who get STIs, show how the school has improved since the CSE program arrived, too." - Principal, Mahatsinjony middle school
 - "Explain to them the situation, that teaching the truth is the best response, not hiding things like, "be careful touching boys," because then kids are just scared to touch their classmates because they think they will get pregnant! Explain the goals of the CSE program, and that the CSE educators are already well-trained." - Principal, Idanda middle school
2. Emphasize that higher educational authorities approve the program

- “It’s development that can’t be blocked, so teachers should help the CSE educators... it’s already been validated by the government.” - Principal, Ambalavao middle school
- “Tell the teacher that this isn’t something the principal made up, that it’s an official partnership in good form.” - Principal, Mahamanina middle school

3. Consider the teacher’s mindset before responding

- “First, consider the mentality of that teacher and decide how to convince them depending on that.” - Principal, Ivohitra middle school
- “The first thing is you must know the mentality of that teacher; you can’t really stop a teacher that is going to hate the CSE program no matter what.” - Principal, Maneva middle school

Principals’ responses convinced us that they are best placed to respond to any potential backlash because of their understanding of the local situation and existing relationships and credibility with teachers and parents.

Furthermore, we gained more insight into what advocacy tools we can produce to support principals (e.g., accessible summaries of local adolescent health statistics, further documentation on PJJ’s program impact data, framed copies of the partnership documents between PJJ and the regional educational authority, and more). We also used principals’ own language and best practices to produce a messaging guide on creating support for the CSE program in their schools. This guide helps principals who are new partners or who lack time or experience to more readily act when there happens to be a concerned teacher or parent.



www.projetjeuneleader.org



fiarleader@gmail.com