

## RESOURCE

Example illustrated story to amplify the testimonies of young people in explaining the links between CSE, positive youth development, and broader benefits

### ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

This brief story was specifically framed to convey the broader (and often unexpected) benefits of CSE, while keeping a realistic balance between personal agency and structures that lead to adolescent outcomes. The illustrations and short text were also specifically designed to be accessible and attractive to students, parents, and teachers in the rural areas where Projet Jeune Leader works.



## 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.

# Framing stories on CSE

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Stories – especially those that center around adolescents’ lived experiences – can help connect CSE to broader social problems in a way that frames CSE as an aspirational solution for positive youth development and engagement. Many resources for storytelling exist; however, here are a few tips specific to telling stories about CSE. We also share a few translated excerpts of the stories we have developed.

# Amplify real stories youth tell about themselves and CSE.

When asked about their experience with CSE, Elyse and Rojotiana shared these two anecdotes about the challenges they faced as young people, and how CSE helped to overcome them.

By using youth's own stories about themselves and CSE, we can mitigate negative perceptions of adolescents. Youth's own stories are more likely to highlight their personal agency and advance a positive vision of youth engagement.

Also, before publishing any stories, we ensure youth are informed partners. They tell us how they would like their story to be told. We ask for their consent to proceed throughout the storytelling process – from the interview to the final draft to the final dissemination.

**LEADERSHIP AND SELF-CONFIDENCE FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE**

**ELYSE,** Elyse's dad and all his friends smoked.

However, Elyse did not feel tempted to smoke because he learned the dangers of smoking from a PJJL educator whom he trusted and looked up to. He also learned from that PJJL educator that ...

...he should take good care of his body, that is why **he refused to give in** to the bad influence of the people close to him. To date, he does not smoke – and he has become an PJJL Educator, too!

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## Start with desired outcomes and collective aspirations.

Elyse and Rojotiana's "successes" in their stories are common aspirations in the local context – not smoking (often associated with negative behavior) and graduating high school.

Their stories link the positive impact of CSE to values-based aspirations adults have for children in their community.



She overcame her fear after she got counseling from the P.J.L. Educator at her school. The P.J.L. Educator told her: "Trust yourself, you have nothing to be afraid of." She never forgot his words that everyone – yes, **every single person on earth – could become confident in themselves.**



She successfully passed the exam and now attends college, while also working as an P.J.L. Educator.

**Unfortunately,** not everyone has had access to this type of education and support, like Elyse and Rojotiana...

# Point out how broader social issues contribute to the conditions we want to change with CSE.

In many stories told about youth, blame is placed on the individual. For example, people often attribute early pregnancy to a girl behaving badly. In Vaniala's story, we emphasize that structural issues (incomplete education at school, and lack of open communication at home) led to her unwanted pregnancy. Then, we emphasize how CSE is a feasible, concrete solution to balance out these broader social issues.

**VANIALA:** Although Vaniala attended primary and secondary school, the only thing she gained there was academic knowledge.



She was the quiet kind and she had no one at home with whom she could discuss the problems she faced as a young girl. In university, she had an unwanted pregnancy.

\*Name changed for confidentiality purposes. True story.

**WHAT IF** Vaniala had the support and opportunity to build leadership skills and self-confidence while in school?



**WOULD THINGS HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT?**  
MAYBE...



This is the very reason why **Projet Jeune Leader** exists. There is no questioning that knowledge on sexual and reproductive health is important. However, for youth to make good use of this knowledge they first need to build their **self-esteem, leadership skills, and self-efficacy** - the things that the program teaches.

The program places one PJI Educator in public middle schools to do exactly this. PJI Educators are meant to be role models that youth can look up to throughout puberty - someone to guide them, advise them, and show them the way to a fulfilling life, as well as how to take on the challenges they will face as youth.



PJI Educators also help youth build self-efficacy and self-confidence, so they can immediately start taking responsibilities, take charge of their lives, and stick to the decisions they have made.

"There is this little girl in 1<sup>st</sup> year of middle school [...], she wants to know how to be more like me, i.e. mature, of good counsel, and never angry."

**PJI Educator Rojotiana**

# Emphasize the “process” benefits of CSE that lead to positive outcomes.

Youth’s stories can highlight positive impacts of CSE beyond just knowledge gains. Elyse and Rojotiana gained self-confidence, took responsibility, and felt that they gained trusted adult because of the CSE program. This helps to boost understanding that opportunities and resources matter for how young people develop – and that CSE promotes positive youth development that yields benefits now and in the future.



Raise your hands leaders!

PJJ Educators boost students’ self-esteem to help them step up and take charge of their future, set themselves clear life goals, and muster the will and perseverance to achieve them. This will help them to avert or overcome potential difficulties and stick to their goals.

“Many of the kids want to move forward but they just don’t believe in themselves. They are unaware that you don’t have to be rich or come from a big town to be a leader. It would be great if they knew that rural and country people can totally be leaders.”

PJJ Educator Elyse



“You gotta have self-confidence [...] you won’t get anywhere without it.”

PJJ Rojotiana

Puberty is a time of growth we all go through. On top of the cognitive, physical, and emotional changes happening during puberty, Malagasy youth are often living in contexts where they face many challenges, such as pressure to have early sex, or dropping out of school because of a lack of financial means.



“Dreams can actually come true.”

PJJ Educator Elyse



TOGETHER, we do not leave Malagasy youth like Variala to fend for themselves in this context. WE CONSTANTLY STRIVE TO INCREASE THEIR OPPORTUNITIES, to build self-confidence and leadership skills, and become engaged in our community, like Elyse and Rojotiana.



“Learning from the PJJ Educator helped me a lot. Now I know several pathways to choose from for my life...”

Student of Elyse



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