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## CONVERSATIONS AND CONTROVERSIES: A SEXUALITY EDUCATION PROGRAM IN CHILE

The confidence placed in me is a thousand times more valuable than what I contributed. I have grown, and I have changed. . . . I loved it that you all believed in us and gave us responsibility. (Student facilitator in Chilean sex education program—JOCAS)

### INTRODUCTION

Although there has long been worldwide support and united political will to protect the health of infants and small children, this strong consensus erodes as children grow up. The seemingly universal adult instinct to protect “innocent” infants and young children falters in adolescence<sup>1</sup> when the major health threats stem from unprotected sexual activity inside and outside of marriage, early childbearing, depression, physical and sexual violence, unsafe abortion, substance abuse, and risk-taking behavior leading to accidents.<sup>2</sup>

All over the world, sexually active young people are denied their rights to the education and services they need to protect their health because of controversies occurring at all levels, from the United Nations summits to individual families. Issues of adolescent sexual and reproductive health stirred fierce polemics at the 1999 and 2004 United Nations post-ICPD meetings<sup>3</sup> and the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the Child in May 2002.<sup>4</sup> As with the abortion issue, this “hot-button” topic threatened to derail efforts to reach a consensus before the final documents were signed.

These controversies focus on young people's right to the means to prevent pregnancy and infection if they are sexually active. One side argues that providing education and services implicitly condones youths' sexual activity and undermines parental authority.<sup>5</sup> The other side argues that states have the obligation to provide adolescents with information and services on reproduction and sexuality to protect their health, no matter whether their parents approve. In myriad local, national, and global debates, decision-makers cannot agree on giving the health needs and rights of young people higher priority than the opinions of parents or socially conservative pressure groups.

Most young people are politically disenfranchised; in most countries, those under 18 cannot vote and have no official means of political participation to defend their interests. As a result, young people have great difficulty gaining access to the resources they need—for health, education and employment—without adult support. For this reason, the literature in the adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH) field speaks of adults as “gatekeepers.” A human rights framework, however, refers to adults in local and national governments—in the policy environment of the young—as “duty-bearers,” that is those with the *obligation* to protect and promote the health and development of young people. These adults do not just keep the gate; they are obliged to open it when young people's lives and well-being are at stake.

Adults with responsibilities for young people either at the family or policy level often are ambivalent about sexual and reproductive health programs. As a result, they fail to fulfill their obligations to the young, and programs and policies may become mired in controversy and bureaucratic infighting. Because many necessary and excellent programs never see the light of day or die a slow death after a brief success, the worldwide supply of reproductive and sexual health education and services for youth is woefully insufficient.

#### Box 4.1

##### Adolescents' Right to Sexual and Reproductive Health Education and Services

States should provide adolescents with safe and supportive environments where they can participate in decisions that affect their health, build life skills, acquire appropriate information, receive counselling and be able to negotiate the health behavior choices they make. The realization of the right to health of adolescents is dependent on the development of youth-sensitive health care, which respects confidentiality and privacy and includes appropriate sexual and reproductive health services. (Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment #14 on the right to the highest attainable standard of health)<sup>6</sup>

This failure to protect the health of the young is widespread in the predominantly Catholic countries of Latin America.

This study analyzes one of these brief successes: a nationwide sexuality education program in Chile. From 1996 through 2000 the Chilean government promoted the "Conversation Workshops on Relationships and Sexuality," best known in Chile by their acronym in Spanish: *JOCAS*.<sup>7</sup> (A slightly different version of the same methodology based in communities, rather than schools, and called *JOCCAS*, was also part of the initiative.) Despite a sharply polarized sociocultural environment on issues of sexuality and reproduction, the program's innovative design enabled it to sidestep the initial controversy and be implemented massively.

Initially developed for use within the schools, the *JOCAS* are a three-part series of highly participatory workshops involving the whole school community: students, teachers, administrators, and parents. As a participatory, decentralized program without a standardized curriculum, the *JOCAS* model was politically feasible for a socially conservative environment. It had powerful effects in breaking down taboos against conversations on sensitive subjects and was remarkable for its emphasis on the autonomous learning and empowerment of adolescents, as well as its relative simplicity and low cost of implementation. The main disadvantage of the model is that its design does not guarantee young participants access to complete and comprehensive information on sexuality and reproductive health. Furthermore, as will be seen, the program's initial success in sidestepping controversy did not continue. Eventually, sexuality education requires a commitment to diversity of opinion and the defense of young people's well-being that is likely to entail considerable political costs for its proponents.

Just as the Consorcio Mujer program in Peru promoted women's participation in health sector services, the *JOCAS* promoted greater student participation in at least one aspect of their schooling. The *JOCAS* were part of a broader democratization effort in Chilean society and in the schools. This movement promoted participatory teaching methods to encourage less authoritarian dynamics in the relationship between teachers and students and to increase student achievement. Participatory mechanisms such as student and parent councils were also encouraged.

The study analyzes how the political, cultural, and multisectoral dynamics surrounding sexuality education affected the program and led to compromises that not only denied young people their right to free expression but also eventually debilitated the popular program by saddling it with the stigma of polemic and undermining political support for its continuance. The *JOCAS* experience also reveals how seemingly trivial changes in program design can empower or disempower the young participants. The lessons from this experience are particularly relevant today as sexuality education programs for young people are under attack in many countries.

### SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN CHILE

In Chile, much of the concern over adolescent pregnancy stems from the growing numbers of unmarried adolescents having children. At the time the JOCAS program was developed in 1995, an often-quoted figure from the 1992 Chilean census<sup>8</sup> was that 40,000 babies were born to adolescent mothers per year, 85.7 percent of them single. Although the fertility rate among fifteen- to nineteen-year-olds is midrange by Latin American standards<sup>9</sup> and has remained stable during the 1980s and 1990s, the rates for those aged fifteen to seventeen increased dramatically in the same period while the rates for those aged eighteen and nineteen fell. The percentage of these births corresponding to single women rose from 40 percent in 1980 to 77 percent in 1998.

While demographic data graphically illustrate the problem, the political and social climate is not conducive to addressing it. Chile is known for being a socially conservative country. Until 2004, Chile was one of two countries in the world where divorce was still illegal.<sup>10</sup> Abortion is not legal even to save the mother's life.

During the seventeen years of the military dictatorship from 1973 to 1990, the social conservatism of the country's military rulers—with roots in the premodern oligarchy—transformed Chile from one of the most liberal Latin American countries to one of the most socially conservative.<sup>11</sup> Although the advent of democracy in 1990 relaxed some aspects of official policy, most sexual and reproductive health policies remain relatively restrictive. The Catholic Church wields a great deal of political influence in Chile, more so than in any other Latin American country, in part due to its progressive role during the dictatorship in defending human rights and social justice.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, it was hardly surprising that in the first year of the *Concertación* government in 1990, initiatives to address unwanted adolescent pregnancies ran into political obstacles.

However, there were some important advances. First, the incoming government established the National Commission on AIDS (CONASIDA),

**Table 4.1**  
Changes in Adolescent Fertility in Chile 1980–1998

Year	Mother's Age and Adolescent Fertility Rate (AFR)		
	15 years	16 years	17 years
1980	13	33	59
1998	23	50	71

*Source:* Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, Estadísticas Vitales.

*Note:* AFR is number of live births for each 1,000 women in the age group.

and growing consciousness of the emerging epidemic added some impetus to initiatives to provide sexuality education to young people in Chile. Second, Chile signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and Congress ratified it in September 1990.<sup>13</sup> States that sign the Convention must bring their policies and programs into line with its terms, including protection for adolescents' health through family planning services.<sup>14</sup> Third, the government revoked a policy barring pregnant young women and young mothers from the daytime public school program.<sup>15</sup>

This last decree stirred the Ministry of Education to address the issue of unwanted adolescent pregnancies among schoolgirls. In 1991 the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), under the leadership of Education Minister Ricardo Lagos and María de la Luz Silva, director of MINEDUC's Women's Program, convened a "consultative committee" to formulate a national policy on sex education.<sup>16</sup> The committee included representatives from the Ministry of Health, CONASIDA, the National Women's Service (SERNAM), prominent NGOs, academics, human rights groups, Catholic and Masonic groups, UNFPA, and a progressive Catholic theologian. The committee represented very diverse viewpoints but agreed on a common agenda of values: respect for human rights and dignity; responsibility toward others; self-esteem and self-respect; and promotion of attitudes of solidarity, acceptance, and love for others. The committee also recognized the sharp cultural and political divisions in Chilean society on promotion of young people's sexual and reproductive health and agreed to devise a policy that would respect this diversity of opinion. "They [the Committee] realized that it would not be possible to implement a centralized sex education program."<sup>17</sup> It reached a consensus that sex education programs would be completely decentralized and that each establishment would develop its own institutional program involving administrators, teachers, students and parents. "Considering that . . . it is impossible to incorporate a common discourse into the school curriculum, a mechanism is required that decentralizes all decisions regarding issues in which diverse norms, values and beliefs exist."<sup>18</sup>

Not everyone agreed with the decision to decentralize.<sup>19</sup> While decentralization was useful politically in that it enabled a sexuality education program to go forward, the decision to leave decisions on content to each individual school did not universally guarantee young people access to all the relevant information. However, the committee's recommendation of decentralized, participatory approaches is consistent with a trend in modern democracies. In addition, since Chilean law provides schools with considerable autonomy, reinforced by the military dictatorship in the last year of its rule,<sup>20</sup> a more centralized approach would have been difficult to enforce. The central political tension between a decentralized, participatory, school-by-school approach and a human rights framework with universal guarantees of children's rights was resolved in favor of the former. One result was that no specific content could be mandated by government authorities.

Two years later in 1993, after receiving feedback from schools and a variety of stakeholders around the country, the Ministry of Education released its official Sexuality Education Policy. In early 1994, soon after the election of President Eduardo Frei and the assumption of a new cabinet, the “Multi-sectoral Committee on Sex Education and Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy”<sup>21</sup> was convened, comprised of representatives from the Education, Health and Women’s ministries, and the National AIDS Commission, along with UNFPA and the National Youth Institute (INJ). The Ministry of Education in 1995 contracted EDUK, a Chilean educational NGO, to run five pilot projects using the JOCAS methodology<sup>22</sup> within the framework of its new policy. Participation by the schools was voluntary, and MINEDUC offered training and technical assistance.

The implementation went very well and excited enthusiasm among the participants as well as education ministry officials and staff.<sup>23</sup> In the school-based version, the JOCAS are comprised of a series of three workshops, known as “moments,” involving the entire school community in conversations—students, administrators, teachers, and parents. These three workshops completely interrupt the school’s routine for two hours. (See the following section for a full description.) The JOCAS were designed to fit in with the school reform program known as “MECE Media,” which proposed to “transform the high-school into a space that interprets students’ preferences and interests,” to foster “greater ongoing student participation . . . in project design, execution, and evaluation,” and to “open up the school to the community.”<sup>24</sup>

In 1996 the Ministry of Education trained its regional staff to assume responsibility for forty more JOCAS in three provinces and sponsored two evaluations of these experiences.<sup>25</sup> Despite the fierce controversies that arose, JOCAS were scaled up significantly in 1997 and were held in more than 200 schools. In 1998 and 1999 the demand for JOCAS from the schools was so great that MINEDUC’s budget could not cover all the requests.<sup>26</sup> By early 2000, the ministry had implemented JOCAS in roughly 600 schools nationwide, more than half of the high schools in the country.

It is a testament to the ability of this model to operate in socially polarized environments that the JOCAS were the second most popular initiative of the Chilean government during these four years.<sup>27</sup> They received the official approval of the Chilean Catholic bishops’ conference in 1998. The level and speed with which MINEDUC scaled up the program was impressive. The government’s ability to do so probably stemmed from several factors: the program’s high-level ministerial and multisectoral support; the decentralized principle of local control mandated by the 1993 guidelines; favorable findings from the initial evaluations; the inclusion of parents and community services in the program; a simple yet well-designed training manual and training program; and the voluntary and participatory nature of the

JOCAS model. According to most informants, the program enjoyed a remarkably high level of acceptance and popularity.

Nonetheless, the government eventually discontinued the program. When a new administration took office in 2000, support for JOCAS was reduced to the presence of a manual on the MINEDUC web site, even though the new president was none other than Ricardo Lagos, the former education minister who had initiated the entire process.<sup>28</sup> The gradual undermining of the JOCAS shows how traditional cultural and political elites were able to counter the overwhelming popular enthusiasm for sexuality education for young people. The widespread acceptance of an educational strategy that avoided monolithic moral or ethical positions on sexuality was not sufficient to counteract the pressures from the Catholic Church hierarchy and the conservative media.

## THE JOCAS PROGRAM MODEL

### Description of the Goals and Methodology

The JOCAS<sup>29</sup> are a decentralized and participatory educational program with three main aims:

- to break the taboo on talking about sex and sexual relationships, initiating conversations on these topics;
- to put the school community in touch with services and professionals in the surrounding community who can respond to the needs of youth in these areas; and
- to empower participants—especially adolescents—to use these conversations to gather information, analyze common problems and identify the best courses of action.

During the preparatory phase an organizing committee of administrators, teachers, students, and parents is trained to run the JOCAS' three- to two-hour sessions, which take place on separate days.

*First workshop: talking it over and generating questions.* Led by a trained peer facilitator, small groups of no more than twenty students meet for one to two hours and talk in an unstructured way about relationships and sexuality. In a large school, this workshop can involve as many as thirty groups of students meeting simultaneously. The teachers and parents meet separately for their own conversations while community resource people unobtrusively observe the small groups. Speaking from their experiences, participants raise their doubts and concerns and share knowledge. At the end of the exercise, each group summarizes its concerns in the form of questions. After the first workshop, the resource people and the school's organizing committee review the questions and discuss possible responses. This initial experience is designed to engage both the emotional and rational sides of the participants and to awaken their interest in learning more.

*Second workshop: gaining knowledge and insight.* In the second workshop, the resource people meet with groups of students of the same age to answer the questions raised in the first workshop. There is also time for dialogue. These adults represent three areas of expertise: health professionals, psychologists or social workers, and religious leaders or other respected figures who can address “values.” The goal is for participants to incorporate new knowledge and perspectives, to enrich their reflections on relationships and sexuality, and to put the students directly in touch with people in their community who can provide further services.

*Third workshop: discerning options.* The final workshop has two stages. In the first, participants return to their first discussion groups, which then choose a previously discussed problematic situation and imagine themselves in the role of its different protagonists (parents, boyfriend, girlfriend). They then discuss at least three different ways to resolve the problem. The aim is not to arrive at a consensus but to help members reflect on their options. Once this discussion is finished, the students from each age group meet with the participating parents from each grade to share the outcome of their discussions. In the original model, the dialogue with parents did not take place.

*Celebrating the experience.* In the original model the student, parent, and teacher groups created murals and skits, followed by a celebration of the experience. However, the young people’s artistic expressions on sexual topics proved too controversial, and murals were eliminated. In the current model, the mixed parent/student groups and the teacher/administrator groups prepare skits, songs, and poems for the celebration.

### The Theory of Learning and Discernment

The JOCAS are based on ideas about health education in which the learner acquires the motivation to learn and the skills to make informed, autonomous decisions. As one of the main JOCAS designers said: “People not only have the right to information; they have the right to learn, which is quite different.”<sup>30</sup>

A key objective of the JOCAS<sup>31</sup> is that young people learn new information and life skills. The model recognizes the informal origins of most learning about relationships and sexuality, and it activates informal conversations and information-seeking as the most effective mode of learning. With regard to learning life skills, the theory of pedagogy and social change underlying the JOCAS is that mutually respectful and uncensored conversations among peers—in which questions and problems are aired and different options for action are analyzed—will strengthen the ability of each participant to “discern” or identify the behavior and actions that best fit his or her values and goals.

Operating in the highly complex realm of sexuality and relationships where strong feelings and sensations often overpower judgment, the model gives



central importance to *discernment*—defined as the thought process underlying sound decision-making—as a key life skill for young people, along with communication and negotiation. Breaking the taboo on conversation helps participants put emotions and sensations into words, thus enabling them to negotiate needs and desires with others openly.

Given the emphasis on discernment and decision-making, the JOCAS explicitly adopt a conception of morality that gives highest priority to individual autonomy and the person's conscience, as opposed to the traditional morality of sacred, fixed norms.<sup>32</sup> This clash in philosophies was at the root of much of the conservative opposition to the JOCAS. The president of the education section of the Chilean Bishops' Conference (*Episcopado*), Francisco Javier Cox, expressed the opponents' point of view:<sup>33</sup>

If you have a 16-year-old listen to people who tell him different things, he becomes completely disoriented. Where is the truth that he seeks? If he receives a kaleidoscope of opinions, he says to himself, "Well, if it's all the same, I'll do what seems best to me." This is just throwing information at him, not educating him. The JOCAS can cause distortions without a framework of values. Maybe later the boy will choose another path, but when he is still developing one cannot put a lot of options in front of him and just let him decide.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, the JOCAS are designed to have a ripple effect, referred to as *resonance* by the program's designers. In the theory underlying the JOCAS, increasing young people's ability to converse on these topics is a key outcome of the model and has multiple effects. The workshops are designed to inspire more and better conversations among peers, within the school community, and in families long after the JOCAS take place.

### The JOCAS' Democratizing Influence

Many participants remarked on the intense, emotional effect of the experience within each school and on many of the participants.<sup>35</sup> The widespread enthusiasm for this program among school communities, municipalities, NGOs, and ministry officials speaks to the power of involving every sector of the school or community in horizontal conversations on matters that deeply affect the lives of all human beings.

Several observers mentioned that the period of dictatorship affected all social institutions and stifled participation. In a country in transition from a seventeen-year dictatorship, grassroots models like the JOCAS unleash much pent-up energy and democratizing impulses, both within schools and in communities. Within the relatively top-down didactic culture of traditional schools, the JOCAS were a breath of fresh air. One student's testimony is typical: "The confidence placed in me is a thousand times more valuable than what I contributed. I have grown and I have changed . . . I loved it that you all believed in us and gave us responsibility."<sup>36</sup>

Dr. Raquel Child, director of the Chilean government's National AIDS Commission (CONASIDA) during the period of the JOCAS, described their democratizing influence:

This model does not involve an official governmental discourse . . . but rather people's own words, meanings, emotions, difficulties and problems. The lack of an official discourse or agenda . . . is an important advance from the perspective of democracy and capacity building. One of the strengths of the JOCAS design is that they rely on local implementation teams so that the model devolves technical skills and responsibility to the community. . . . This methodology is applicable to any topic.<sup>37</sup>

Part of the democratizing influence of the JOCAS was their enhancement of free expression. The taboo on speaking about sexuality was broken simultaneously for adults and students alike, and the conversations often felt revolutionary to the participants. Although official evaluations did not set out to measure this enhancement of free expression and horizontal interactions, numerous testimonials bear witness to the catalytic power of the program.

I think the JOCAS can be a true turning point in the life of a school, that there are ripple effects for other issues, and that the experience can even change the way the school is governed. . . . Because this affects us all, [talking about] the issue changes [each individual] as well. . . . This is why the model is so powerful. No one leaves a JOCAS unchanged.<sup>38</sup>

### EVALUATION OF THE JOCAS: EXPECTATIONS AND RESULTS

The JOCAS were intended to have the following measurable results:

- increase young people's access to correct information to protect their health;
- increase their access to services;
- improve their communications, negotiations and decision-making skills; and
- improve and increase young people's connections with adults.

While all these goals were important, most evaluations of the model focused on increases in the number of conversations and improvement in their quality as perceived by all the actors involved. For the most part, they did not measure increases in knowledge or in service use. However, as part of the inquiry about conversations, most measured information-seeking behavior by students and evaluated the connections with parents and teachers.

Using the frameworks for adolescent health promotion developed by WHO, UNFPA, and UNICEF,<sup>39</sup> the following table (Table 4.2) illustrates

how the JOCAS were designed to meet the requirements for successful adolescent health programs. The second column notes the successes and failures identified in this study and in the evaluations carried out by SERNAM and the Ministry of Education.<sup>40</sup>

The evaluations of the 1996 and 1997 JOCAS<sup>41</sup> show both high levels of satisfaction among the participants and effectiveness in impact on the quantity and quality of conversations following the JOCAS among the youth, as well as between youth and the adults in their lives. EDUK conducted a follow-up survey of thirty-six schools involved in the 1996 JOCAS twelve to eighteen months after the event;<sup>42</sup> another study contracted by the Ministry of Education used a sample of 117 schools in the 1997 JOCAS.<sup>43</sup>

EDUK evaluated the JOCAS for impact in three areas: increase in the quantity and quality of conversations on relationship and sexuality topics among students, teachers, and parents (the main expected result); the institutionalization of school-based curriculum or activities related to these topics; and increased institutional networks in the surrounding communities to increase availability of information, counseling, and health services for students.

The MINEDUC study evaluated the JOCAS for later effects in five areas: quantity of conversations, quality of conversations, available information, impact on STIs, and impact on adolescent pregnancy.<sup>44</sup>

Although not explicitly studied as an indicator in the surveys, one of the most important results of the JOCAS mentioned by all informants was that the participating adults “had their blindfolds removed” with regard to the level of the students’ sexual activity. These new realizations of the students’ needs for information, counseling and services were expected to create emotional momentum among the adults in the school community—school administrators, teachers, and parents—to implement continuing sexuality education programs.

The clearest and most favorable results of the JOCAS are in the area of more and better conversations on sexuality. In the EDUK evaluation, all categories of respondents reported that students asked more questions and sought more information. Seventy-nine percent of teachers and students reported an increase in conversations on relationships and sexuality. In both evaluations, slightly more than half the students said that they perceived a more positive emotional climate surrounding these issues in conversations with teachers. The student focus groups clarified the nature of this change: previous references to sexuality tended to be either “pornographic” or in the form of jokes; the subject could not be discussed respectfully and seriously.

“The JOCAS triggered an environment in which [resource people and teachers] were seeking training and asking questions. Thousands of people ask questions during the JOCAS.”<sup>45</sup> The program theory posits that this experience is catalytic, leading to increased motivation to keep asking

**Table 4.2**  
**Analysis of the Results of the JOCAS**

Requirements for Successful Adolescent Health Promotion	Successes and Failures in the Expected Outcomes in Practice (Expected Outcomes in Italics, Comments on the Experience in Normal Font)
1. Youth acquire accurate information.	<p><i>The second workshop in which community resource people respond to the questions of the students is the first opportunity to acquire information.</i> In general, the JOCAS fulfilled this expectation, and most evaluations show a high appreciation for this workshop. However, there were few mechanisms for quality control of the information provided by the local resource people, and some schools censored certain topics.</p> <p>Ministry of Education officials noted that many schools established ongoing sexuality education programs after the JOCAS but had no systematic data on this question.</p> <p><i>One expected outcome is that youth seek additional information after the JOCAS.</i> The evaluation showed this outcome to be the most notable success, with students reporting more information-seeking post-JOCAS, approaching both teachers and other sources with their questions.</p> <p>Young people's access to additional information is higher in the JOCCAS<sup>a</sup> through the community resource fair run by health institutions, other government agencies and local NGOs.</p> <p><i>The discernment exercise in the third workshop and conversations about issues should lead to improved ability to communicate on these topics and to weigh different options, which in turn should lead to decision-making that promotes health.</i></p> <p>Fully 85 percent of evaluation respondents reported an improved ability to discuss these topics. There is no evidence about other behavioral changes because of the JOCAS.</p> <p>Content analysis of some of the conversations in the JOCAS showed many thoughtful and rich discussions of the different options for action in a problematic situation. However, evaluators also noted a problem with the quality of some conversations when the student facilitator who led the group imposed a judgmental and morally rigid social norm, thus closing off discussion.<sup>c</sup></p>
2. Youth acquire life skills (negotiation, conflict resolution, critical thinking, decision-making, and communication). <sup>b</sup>	
3. Youth obtain counseling (especially	<p><i>Breaking the silence on these topics with parents and teachers should make these adults more accessible for counseling. New connections with community resource people might provide new counselors.</i></p>

during crises) and have a connection with at least one supportive adult.

4. Youth have access to health services, including those for reproductive health.

5. Youth live in a safe, supportive environment.

6. Youth have opportunities for participating meaningfully in their communities and in programs and policies to promote their health.

In the 1996 and 1997 JOCAS evaluations, 50 percent of students reported a positive effect on conversations with teachers, while even more noted a positive effect on conversations among peers. While parental participation was very low, in the small sub-sample whose parents (mainly mothers) attended, students noted positive effects on their conversations. The evaluation showed no increased connections with the community resource people after the JOCAS.

*The health provider who participates in the JOCAS (usually a midwife) should establish herself in the young people's minds as a sympathetic adult and a resource, thus encouraging them to come for services if they need them. An expected benefit was that the students would seek out the social workers or the midwife who attended the JOCAS later if they had additional needs for information or services.*

Because of political controversies regarding adolescents' access to contraceptives without parental consent, increase in young people's usage of confidential reproductive health services was never an explicit, public goal of the JOCAS. In addition, increased usage was never included in the evaluations due to turf divisions: MINEDUC would not set a goal for and evaluate health services that do not fall under its jurisdiction.

*The JOCAS dialogues between teachers and students, and those between parents and students, were designed to create more supportive inter-generational dialogue and more support for sexuality education.*

Fifty-two percent of participants noted a positive change in the emotional climate surrounding the issues. See other comments in #3 on increased adult-young person communications.

Finally, teachers and administrators reported that the JOCAS were a stimulus to learning more about participatory pedagogical methods, a favorable byproduct in the hierarchical culture of the traditional public school.

*Student leaders participate fully in the planning of the JOCAS and are trained to lead small-group discussions in the first and third workshops. Many informants found this aspect of the JOCAS very important. Having students be entirely in charge of running the first and third workshops without adult supervision was entirely unprecedented in most schools. The orderly fashion in which the students led and organized these workshops was astonishing to many of the teachers and administrators.*

Some interviewees asserted that students' protagonism in the school-based JOCAS was reduced after public controversies arose in 1996.

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<sup>a</sup>JOCCAS are the community-based version of the school-based JOCAS. Previous drafts of this chapter discussed the differences between JOCAS and JOCCAS in some depth, and are available from the author.

<sup>b</sup>The enumeration of the "life skills" identified as protective factors for adolescent health comes from UNICEF, UNAIDS, WHO, 2002, 29.

<sup>c</sup>Notes from conversation with Irma Palma and Paula Arragada, September 2002.

questions and keep learning. However, only 35 to 45 percent of adult respondents reported an improved climate in conversations among adults.

In some cases JOCAS may have contributed toward a more democratic and horizontal relationship between teachers and students. Several other informants testified to the adults' surprise at how maturely the students behaved and conversed on these subjects.

One of the main strengths of the methodology is that it gives the young people a space that they use freely and positively, which produces a great impact in adults' perception of the students' behavior.<sup>46</sup>

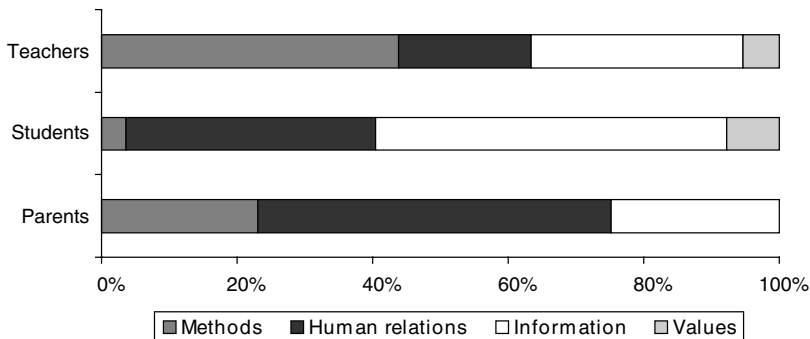
I am impressed by the good conduct of my fellow students. They behaved better than they do in classes. Even the worst troublemakers were calm. . . . For me, it was an extremely important experience because for the first time I had the opportunity to find out that I like being a leader. *Student coordinator*<sup>47</sup>

I discovered that I am no longer so ashamed to talk in public; I even like it. I believe I have more self-confidence now. I brought out into the open the personality that I had hidden away. *Student facilitator*

The MINEDUC evaluation found the organizational benefits to be mainly "integration within the school," that is, improved relations between teachers and students or new opportunities for democratic participation in the schools (51 percent). The evaluation likewise noted the JOCAS' "stimulus to the school community in other areas" (57 percent) and an incentive for teachers to learn new pedagogical methods. The EDUK evaluation found that 41 percent of the schools had adapted the JOCAS methodology to other topics, often substance abuse prevention programs.

Both evaluations indicate that there was only a slight increase in integration of sexuality education into the curriculum. In the MINEDUC evaluation, 85 percent of schools already had "some activity related to relationships and sexuality"<sup>48</sup>—mostly basic reproduction information in biology class—but the teachers highlighted the participatory methodology as a highly valued innovation.

Fathers, mothers, students, and teachers in the focus groups perceived the positive effects fade without sustained follow-up interventions. Repeatedly, focus group participants wondered about the continuity of JOCAS and proposed to include younger students in them.<sup>49</sup> Figure 4.1 from the MINEDUC evaluation<sup>50</sup> showed the significantly different needs of each sector. Sixty-two percent of students stated that their main need was information while only 25 to 29 percent of the adults concurred. Parents and students gave similar priority to human relations (44 percent and 52 percent), while the majority of teachers were eager to be better trained in the new participatory methodologies. It is ironic, given the Catholic Church's insistence on involvement of parents to ensure attention to values, that few of the parents surveyed wanted or expected the school to impart values in sexuality education.



**Figure 4.1**  
Needs Assessment: Opinions of Parents, Teachers, and Students

Many expected the experience of the JOCAS to stimulate the school to hold similar exercises every year. Although there is no concrete data on repeat JOCAS in succeeding years, some evidence exists that autonomous replications were still widespread in 2003, four years after the ministry stopped promoting the program.<sup>51</sup>

Since the existing evaluations were all based on retrospective data collection on perceptions of impact, no clear association can be drawn between the JOCAS and decreases in levels of unwanted pregnancies or STIs or increases in the adolescents' use of health services. However, the JOCAS program coincided with the establishment of adolescent health services by MENSAL, and these services were introduced to the JOCAS participants.

### Obstacles to Parental Involvement

The JOCAS rarely met the goal of improving communications between parents and children even though everyone insisted that this was a goal of the exercise. A number of factors led to this failure to achieve parental involvement precisely at the time when the issue of parental authority became a lightning rod in the political controversy surrounding the JOCAS.

While there were many points of contention in the multisectoral commission that set the guidelines for sexuality education in Chile in the early 1990s, all agreed that parental participation was essential. The designers and supporters of the original model of the JOCAS—most of whom fall into the “liberal” or “secular” end of the spectrum—were in full agreement and built parental involvement into the program. For this reason, the organizing committee is comprised of the entire “school community,” which explicitly includes parents. They are also invited to participate in the JOCAS by holding group discussions among themselves in the first workshop and participating in the third and final workshop with students.

Those in charge of the JOCAS within the Ministry of Education wrestled with the challenge of securing parental involvement and acknowledged this aspect as a shortcoming of the program: “The process of involving parents has been extremely slow. Less than a third of parents come; generally, it is a small group of mothers. In fact, it is mainly the young people who hold conversations.”<sup>52</sup> Most informants and all evaluations agreed that fathers rarely attended the JOCAS.

Not surprisingly, the effects on family life were limited to those few parents who attended, and young people expressed sharp dissatisfaction with their absence in the evaluations.<sup>53</sup> For those parents who did attend, the benefits in communication were confirmed by the students and parents interviewed. The JOCAS vividly demonstrated to the adults the communications gap between parents and children and the high cost of not having conversations about sexuality.<sup>54</sup>

Since parental involvement was such a high priority for all involved—conservatives and liberals, ministry officials and students—why was participation so low? Several answers emerge from the evaluations.

One commonly cited obstacle to parental involvement was logistical: parents who work full-time could not attend during the school day. The 1995 pilots experimented with several strategies, including holding a “sharing” meeting on a Saturday after the JOCAS were over. However, none of their strategies worked, suggesting that other factors besides employment limited parental participation. In desperation, one school held a JOCAS just for parents at the compulsory annual meeting when grades are given out.<sup>55</sup>

Another reason cited for low parental participation was the active opposition of some fathers who tried to prevent the mothers from attending.<sup>56</sup> Some said that their wives already knew the information, while others were afraid that their wives would be asked to share information about their sexual life.<sup>57</sup>

EDUK also identified traditional gender roles that assign the woman sole responsibility for the education of children as an underlying factor in paternal resistance or indifference. Mothers generally represent the family at most parent meetings in the schools on any topic. According to a father in one focus group, “Very few of us fathers dare to show up at the school to see what is going on with our children.”<sup>58</sup>

Yet there are deeper, more systemic answers to this question of why this key component of the program did not work as expected, having to do with the school system itself. Worldwide, secondary schools have had great difficulty in involving parents meaningfully in important events and decisions in the life of the school,<sup>59</sup> and the Chilean school system is no exception. Parents and guardians distance themselves from the schools as their children grow older, due to the greater autonomy of adolescents and the complex organization of most secondary schools. Another barrier is geographic. Secondary schools tend to draw students from a larger area than primary schools, and as a result, many families live a considerable distance away.



In addition, specific historical factors related to the organizational culture of Chilean schools may help explain parents' relative exclusion from secondary school affairs. Gabriela Pischedda<sup>60</sup> comments:

The term "school community" dates from the educational reforms of the government of Eduardo Frei [1964–1970]. The "national unified school" involved the parents and the community with the idea that the school would open itself to the community. Parents and teachers participated much more in the schools from 1964 until the military coup in 1973. This model was lost under the dictatorship, and the director began to be the absolute king.

One Ministry of Education official alluded to the legacy of the dictatorship in Chilean schools:

Many school directors do not view parent participation favorably; many are politically conservative because they were appointed during the dictatorship. . . . The law [on school governance] is very general, and there is little interest in the topic in Congress. [Often] there is no parent-school council because there is no directive mandating their existence. Many directors say that in low-income neighborhoods, families are fragmented, and the parents' workday is extremely long.<sup>61</sup>

The perceptions of these professionals were borne out by the author's experience in a training workshop for the JOCAS in June 1999. Committees from eight secondary schools comprised of teachers, administrators, parents, and students were invited to attend. However, there had been no systematic recruitment of parents (mothers in this case) for this training. All six women at the training were parents at the school where the training took place; none came from the other seven schools. One mother related that she was invited to the training when she happened to visit the school to deliver a note and was begged to stay by the principal. She commented on the nature of parent participation in the schools: "They call us when they want support, but we do not participate in any decisions related to the school." Other key actors<sup>62</sup> echoed these mothers' complaints that parents are "used" by schools. Magdalena Kleincsek of EDUK commented: "Parents are called when the grades are given out, when fees are due, or for financial or logistical support. The school does not invite them to be part of the process [of education]."

### **Reflection on the Evaluation Results**

According to the MINEDUC evaluations, the JOCAS had the most impact within the school environment on breaking the silence surrounding sexuality, on information seeking among students, and on the quantity and quality of conversations on sexuality and relationships among students and between students and teachers. However, the data from this study and the participant-observer process evaluations noted other weaknesses in

the JOCAS program besides the failure to involve parents. Although the JOCAS were a highly cost-effective intervention with proven benefits, they were events rather than a permanent resource in the schools; by nature, they need complementary interventions. Some of these limitations of the JOCAS also arise from the nature of participatory, social interventions, the modality used by the JOCAS to counter conservative resistance to sex education. The next section will show how both local and national political pressures exacerbated these limitations.

## CONTROVERSIES AND CHANGES IN THE MODEL

### The JOCAS Design and “Double Discourse” Systems

It is useful to analyze the controversies surrounding the JOCAS and the government’s reaction to them in light of the concept of a “double discourse” system (see Chapter 1). At the heart of the double discourse system lies the chasm between a public discourse that upholds traditional religious precepts that limit individual choices and an unofficial private discourse—in conversations, interior monologues, and the confessional—that rationalizes transgressions and broader choices. Broader choices are never guaranteed, depending most often on chance and privilege.

Applying this concept to sexuality education, the dominant public discourse is the moral stance of the Catholic Church promoting abstinence until marriage even when many or most young people flout the norm. The reliance on private or semiprivate group conversations in the JOCAS program fit into a double discourse system because the content of the program (that is, the content of the conversations) never entered the public realm. The JOCAS conversations broke taboos, but they operated semi-privately within the confines of each school or community. They were neither in the public eye nor involved official pronouncements. Controversy erupted when the content of these semiprivate group conversations were represented in student murals and photographed by journalists, thus entering the news media and the public realm.

In a double discourse system, the expanded private choices available depend on mechanisms that are not universal; access to these mechanisms often depends on chance or one’s socioeconomic status. This principle operated in the decentralized and voluntary design of the JOCAS program, since students’ access to the program was not guaranteed. While the program’s coverage of 600 schools—50 percent of the secondary schools in the country—in a four-year period is indeed impressive,<sup>63</sup> the glass is also half-empty. Half of the 1,200 high schools in Chile did not participate for a variety of reasons,<sup>64</sup> and the adolescents in many or most of these schools were deprived of their right to full and unbiased information on reproduction and sexuality. Other schools—often religious—accepted the invitation and

held a JOCAS but censored the information provided. Probably more than half of Chilean secondary school students during this period did not receive the intended benefits of the JOCAS program.

In keeping with the double discourse system, the *lack of official published content* was a precondition for the broad implementation of the JOCAS, yet also another aspect of the JOCAS strategy that did not guarantee young people's access to information. The absence of any official manual or textbook with complete, factual responses to young people's questions saved the program from political battles with conservatives over the content. In response to this strategy, the conservative opponents had to rely on observations of JOCAS in order to find a basis for their attacks.

According to many informants, the quality and comprehensiveness of the information provided to students was undermined by this approach. In the second workshop when outside advisors answer students' questions, their responses depend both on the advisors' knowledge and attitudes and on the degree of censorship exercised over the conversations.

Some JOCAS designers believed that it was practically impossible to censor a conversation-based model. However, the design of the second workshop in which resource people answer students' questions did allow censorship to occur. Evaluators cited instances in which community resource people agreed in advance with the school director not to answer certain types of questions or to answer them with only one possible option for action, thereby "playing tricks on the model."<sup>65</sup>

Most interviewees who were closely involved with the JOCAS agreed that in most instances health professionals provided factual responses to factual questions. As a result, the health sector came under attack for not adding a specific moral, religious dimension to its answers. Conservative media fanned the flames of controversy by citing numerous instances of this type of direct response.

Another way in which the effectiveness of the JOCAS could be undermined was by limiting the diversity of resource people. *The presence of different views within the group of participants is essential for the model to function as designed.* The designers of the JOCAS assumed that multiple points of view would emerge during the conversations, allowing the process of discernment to occur as participants are confronted with and asked to consider a range of viewpoints and options.

Unfortunately, in response to the attacks the new Ministry of Education manuals watered down this commitment to pluralism. The following quote from the current JOCAS training manual (1999) refers to pluralism as an *option*, as a stance that a school *might* decide to adopt:

Since the JOCAS are organized by each school, the organizing committee takes responsibility for stating the school's framework for dealing with these topics, and therefore they decide whom to invite from the community. Besides technical

competence, for some educational communities the ethical-religious position of its collaborators could be important. For example, if the establishment defines itself as Catholic, the committee could invite Church clergy or leaders (*agentes pastorales*) and Catholic professionals. *If the school community gives importance to pluralism* [author's emphasis], they could invite representatives from other churches and lay resource people to enrich the dialogue.<sup>66</sup>

Luckily, diversity of opinion on sexual and reproductive health matters is present in most sectors in Chilean society, and censorship seems to have been the exception rather than the rule. Indeed, precisely because in most cases the officially sanctioned, religiously based discourse did not dominate the experience, the JOCAS were fiercely attacked.

### The 1996 Controversies

Following the original 1995/96 model of the JOCAS, in the third workshop (*discernimiento*) after the group discussion in the “day of expression,” each student group left a written and artistic record of its reactions to the JOCAS on giant paper murals or collages, and composed songs or skits that were shared with the whole school community. This was the point of vulnerability upon which the enemies of the JOCAS could pounce, because speech or expression tolerated in private could not be tolerated in public. The murals in the JOCAS's third workshop—the only *public* moment that created a permanent record that could be photographed—inevitably generated unfavorable media attention.

In September 1996 a journalist from the conservative newspaper *El Mercurio* published a lengthy Sunday feature article on the State's “New Sex Education,” including a front-page picture of seventh-grade schoolboys holding condoms they supposedly received from a health educator<sup>67</sup> and pictures of the student murals with condoms and contraceptive methods. One note referred to some “un-publishable” drawings, such as one “in bad taste” showing a boy masturbating “with the semen spraying in all directions.” The journalist also described a skit in which a boy and girl entered a tent and “made movements and noises simulating a sexual relationship.” A month of extensive press coverage and controversies followed.

In 1996 and through periodic controversies during the following four years, the three ministers involved in the JOCAS and the Christian Democratic President Eduardo Frei publicly defended the program. The Minister of SERNAM, Josefina Bilbao, played an especially prominent and steadfast role in defense of the JOCAS. In 1996, the right-wing parties introduced a bill into the Congress to stop MINEDUC from holding the JOCAS. Thanks to very firm support from all parties in the *Concertación*, as well as from the president, Bilbao, and Education Minister Sergio Molina, the bill was voted down. However, the program was successfully tarred as controversial or tasteless.

In addition, Catholic Church leaders made two requests, using both articles in the press and direct contacts with ministers: to eliminate the murals and to replace the artistic expression in the third workshop with a parent-student dialogue. The ministers agreed. Equally worrisome was the pressure to reduce the participation of the health sector. After 1996, MINEDUC assumed sole control of the JOCAS and excluded other ministries from decisions about them, while reducing its participation in the Multisectoral Committee. This acquiescence to church pressures indicates that the political costs of the JOCAS had risen to levels that were unacceptable to the lead ministers.

In the 1999 manual, artistic expression was restored but without the murals. It was still deemed prudent to leave no permanent record of the content of JOCAS conversations, even if produced by both parents and students. Murals would never again provide photo opportunities for unsympathetic journalists, thus making it more difficult for the content of conversations to erupt into the public realm. These changes in the third workshop fit into a double discourse system where transgressive actions or speech must take place in private.

Table 4.3 tracks the two waves of changes in the third workshop of the official JOCAS model through changes in the instructions in the 1996, 1997 and 1999 training manuals.

Naturally, opinions are divided regarding MINEDUC's decision to accede to the requests of the Catholic hierarchy. On the positive side, many believe that the decision allowed the program to go forward and expand. When María de la Luz Silva testified before the Catholic Church's "Technical Secretariat for Education" to describe the changes in the 1997 JOCAS, the members were so pleased that they issued a favorable report in writing. In fact, the Catholic hierarchy had divided opinions on the program, and many were sympathetic to it. Temporarily, at least, this report served to silence the most vehement opponents from the conservative sectors of the church allied with the right-wing parties eager to exploit the issue. It also calmed the fears of school directors alarmed by the news stories.

Some officials and trainers associated with the JOCAS also believed that the changes in the third workshop did not necessarily weaken the model. Arriagada comments that the students' artistic expressions often just repeated pro-forma and culturally acceptable slogans (like "no to abortion, yes to life") and did not reflect the richness and complexity of the private conversations. Silva notes that after the controversies students toned down their expressions to protect the JOCAS from attack. These comments suggest that the scandal-mongers in the media who invaded the semiprivate sphere of the JOCAS in effect converted the third workshop into a public space where the diverse and nonhegemonic content of the private conversations could not be aired.

With regard to the parent-student dialogue, many believe it was a valuable addition to the JOCAS. Even though too few parents participated, Rodrigo Vera of UNFPA and Silva found that both students and parents spoke their minds, leading to changed views and better understanding on both sides.

**Table 4.3**  
**Structural Changes in the Third Stage of the JOCAS**

1995–1996	1997–1998	1999 Onward*
Discernment exercise for student-only groups.	Discernment exercise for student-only groups.	Discernment exercise for student-only groups but with educational resource people observing and available to respond to questions.
No dialogue session was in the original model.	Dialogue on the discernment exercise with students and adults—both parents and teachers.	Dialogue on the discernment exercise with students and parents. Teachers and educational resource people are observers and note takers to use what they have observed as the basis for future actions.
Development of an artistic expression by each student discernment group, including murals, skits, poems and songs. Parents and teachers do this exercise within their own groups.	No artistic expression.	These mixed groups of students, parents and teachers develop skits, poems and songs. There are no murals.
All of the groups view the artistic expressions of each group.	No artistic expression.	All of the groups view the skits, poems and songs of each group.
	<p><b>Closing Ceremony:</b> mainly to thank participants and to “express the pleasure of participating in this experience.” (However, one of the quotes on this page in the manual mentions artistic expressions.)</p>	<p><b>Closing Ceremony:</b> to thank participants <i>and bear personal testimonies from some</i>, as well as to “express the pleasure of living through this experience.”</p>

\*The JOCAS manual on the MINEDUC Website as of December 2003 had disappeared by June 28, 2005.

On the other hand, many stakeholders held negative views of MINEDUC's decision to yield to the Catholic Church's requests. Indeed, it is particularly troubling that the government yielded to the political pressures from the media and the bishops given that the controversy was entirely generated from outside the school communities that had experienced the JOCAS: no parents or school administrators who had participated ever complained. On the contrary, parents and students from one community marched to the capital in support of the JOCAS, an unprecedented show of support for a MINEDUC program.

One public opinion poll in 1998 showed that the JOCAS were one of the most popular programs of the Frei government, and evaluations show percentages of dissatisfaction below 10 percent among both students and adults. The power of the Catholic hierarchy to counter these clear trends in public opinion is not an isolated case. As discussed in Chapter 1, in spite of polls that clearly showed an overwhelming majority of Chileans to be in favor of a divorce law, Chile only managed to legalize divorce in 2004, fourteen years after the end of the military dictatorship.

Would the scaling up of the JOCAS have been possible without acceding to the bishops' requests? This is impossible to answer in hindsight, but it is clear that the decision was consistent with a general pattern of yielding to pressures from the Catholic hierarchy. Often, the pressure was indirect. Silva says Catholic influence is expressed directly at the top, and ministers must face the dilemma of fielding requests from the bishops while aware of the clerics' power to affect their future careers.<sup>68</sup>

One observer, journalist and HIV/AIDS activist Tim Frasca, comments that the MINEDUC reaction fits into a pattern of timidity with regard to sexual and reproductive rights issues in the *Concertación* parties.

The excessive concern to find a common ground and achieve a consensus on the part of the government people involved in the construction of the JOCAS doomed them from the outset by failing to start from a rights-based perspective. . . . Why did they set it up to lose in this way, knowing that the conservatives do not want consensus or pluralism but to impose their position? Had the government side started out by saying, 'We are going to provide some elements because young people have these rights, and we can see how to try to respond to your concerns about this,' there would have been a better basis for resisting the attacks later.

Other stakeholders, including most of the members of the Multisectoral Committee, believed that the MINEDUC decisions seriously weakened the JOCAS model by depriving young people of their freedom of expression on sexuality and relationships.

### **Compromising the Right to Freedom of Expression**

Some believed that the changes in the third workshop did not undermine the basic goal of empowerment of young people.<sup>69</sup> Others, however, saw

freedom of expression as a basic element of empowerment, and viewed the changes in the third workshop as a violation of Chilean young people's rights, based on Article 13 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). (see Box 4.2) However, reflecting the controversies surrounding the rights of young people, the CRC also qualifies this right, allowing exceptions to "protect public health or morals."

This is a crucial phrase in the CRC because in Chile as elsewhere, the free expression of young people—especially on topics related to sexuality—tends to be transgressive. It is irreverent, joking, explicit and therefore often "scandalous." In modern, urban societies, adolescence tends to be a stage of rebellion and questioning of adult values and assumptions. The caption under a photo of a skit in one widely quoted article on the "renovated" 1997 JOCAS refers to this limit on youthful expression: "The day of expression, in which the students did skits to show what they felt and had learned in the JOCAS, was eliminated this year. The young people's scenarios offended public decency."<sup>70</sup>

What is lost when young people do not enjoy freedom of expression? It is precisely this right that double discourse systems compromise for both young people and adults. When young people's expression is silenced to "protect public morals," adults close to them are deprived of information on what young people are thinking and feeling about sexuality. When the adults are not informed, they can pretend to themselves that young people are following publicly espoused norms on sexuality. This refusal to allow or listen to transgressive free expression by young people keeps adults at the community and governmental levels blissfully ignorant.

Indeed, one of the main positive effects of the JOCAS, as mentioned by teachers and parents alike, was that the JOCAS "removed our blindfolds" and forced them to recognize that their students and children had pressing needs for information and resources due to their sexual activity.<sup>71</sup> It could be

#### **Box 4.2**

##### **Article 13: Convention on the Rights of the Child**

1. The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.
2. The exercise of this right may be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:
  - a. For respect of the rights or reputations of others; or
  - b. For the protection of national security or of public order, or of public health or morals.



argued that adults *need* exposure to the free speech of the young on sexuality to generate the political will to protect young people's sexual health.

### **Intergenerational Dialogue and Young People's Empowerment**

Chile's experiences echoed global discourse and processes regarding sexuality education. At first, conservatives repeatedly insist that sexuality education should take place primarily in the family and that the state has little or no role to play. Many explicitly refer to fears that the "amoral" or "secular" modern state will undermine their religious values. However, in Chile as elsewhere, there is ample evidence that families do not educate their children adequately on these issues and that in fact most parents favor these programs in the school.<sup>72</sup> In Chile, as a result, the arguments in favor of public sector sexuality education as a key strategy to prevent adolescent pregnancy and HIV/AIDS finally prevailed. Once publicly funded programs exist, conservatives then turn their attention to the content of any officially sponsored educational materials and to the issue of adequate parental participation.

Promoters of the JOCAS explicitly incorporated parents into their design, not only because alleged undermining of parental authority is the most frequent conservative line of attack against sexuality programs, but also because across the entire political spectrum, there is agreement that parental involvement is a key component of programs to promote young people's health and development. In the JOCAS evaluation studies, students strongly endorsed the goal of improving the quality of their conversations with their parents on these topics.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, despite this widespread agreement and conservative insistence on a strong parental role, participation by parents was weak. The ensuing controversies showed that conflicting motivations were behind the professed goal of parental involvement.

On the "liberal" end of the spectrum, the current accepted wisdom is that positive relationships and communications with parents and other close adults are key to protecting the health of young people.<sup>74</sup> It is now widely recognized that programs that target adolescents in isolation from their social environment are less effective and that promoting "safe and supportive environments" is a key element of any adolescent program.<sup>75</sup> The involvement of parents makes programs more effective when adults reinforce the messages of the program by communicating with their children on these issues.

In spite of this apparent agreement, the differences in the underlying agendas of the conservative and liberal sectors generated tensions in the JOCAS. The changes in the third workshop are illustrative. One faction gave greater emphasis to the goal of empowering young people as autonomous moral agents through improving their conversational and decision-making skills; the other emphasized improving intergenerational dialogue between young people and their parents or teachers. Increasing the emphasis on this latter goal—embodied in the new parent/child dialogue in the revised third

workshop—made the JOCAS more palatable to certain critics and led to the endorsement of the Catholic Church’s Education Secretariat.

However, behind the conservative emphasis on strengthening “inter-generational dialogue” was an attempt to use sexuality education to instill a set of moral values and reassert parental control, not to empower the adolescents by better enabling them to learn to make their own decisions and receive uncensored information. Although the JOCAS model expressly includes the participation of a person from the community to facilitate a discussion of values, the writings of Catholic opponents make it clear that there are only certain values that they expect the adults involved to promote.<sup>76</sup> The evaluation of the 1996 JOCAS noted that this tendency permeates the culture in Chile: “What is ‘moral’ appears as the opposite of what is ‘sexual.’ Moreover, when referring to ‘morals’ or ‘values,’ it is evident that they mean only ‘abstinence from sexual relations.’”<sup>77</sup>

Defenders of the original model agree that values need to be discussed but that this discussion should include the full range of values in the current social context, including young people’s freedom of conscience, their responsibility to protect their own health and that of their eventual partners, avoidance of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, the elimination of the sexual double standard, and opposition to violence and discrimination against women.

Ironically, the 1997 changes in the third workshop both promoted and undercut this goal of improving intergenerational dialogue. Although parental participation was low, the following account from María de la Luz Silva describes the benefits derived from the added parent-child dialogue in the third workshop:

It was very interesting that the concerns of the young people (expressed in the First Workshop) were completely different from those of their parents or the teachers. . . . I think the cultural gap between the generations is deepest in relation to sexuality. TV and other forms of globalized communication have changed the cultural context, but more for young people. Adults have learned that one should not talk about this topic and feel very uncomfortable . . . while the young people often think that the adults do not want to speak of this due to some psychological problem because they [must] know that young people are having sex. The adults, on the other hand, think that young people are disrespectful when they speak so openly, and they roundly condemn young people’s sexual behavior. . . . It was really marvelous when these barriers came down and young people and adults managed to understand each other in this small group. . . . Such emotions were expressed! When the adults spoke, they revealed how they were educated, and this was a significant lesson for the young. In turn, the adults realized that all young people thought differently [about sex], not just the “bad ones.”

Although the elimination of the artistic component of the JOCAS final session undoubtedly weakened this communication, the author attended a

training session for school-based JOCAS in June 1999 in which the students, teachers, and parents *separately* prepared skits and composed songs to perform in front of the entire group. The two student groups dealt with unwanted pregnancies and abortion in skits produced independently of adult oversight. Trainers who were strictly following the official manual would not have organized the training to provide this option to the young people.

Once again, the double discourse system operated so that the “official” manual mandated a less empowering alternative while an informal and unofficial mechanism (in this case, tacit agreements among the trainers) provided expanded options for self-expression to the young people in the relative privacy of the JOCAS training sessions.

### **Further Limits on Free Expression**

Two other incidents in the history of the JOCAS illustrate the limitations on free public expression that operate in a double discourse system.

#### ***A Manual for Resource People***

Evaluations of the JOCAS had documented a need to give increased technical training to the community resource people. Ministry observers and evaluators had noted that some teachers and resource people were answering questions either with incorrect information or in dogmatic ways that shut off dialogue with the young people. The Multisectoral Committee, under the leadership of SERNAM, contracted consultants to document the most frequently asked questions in the JOCAS, as well as to suggest possible responses from technical resource people. The authors from Guernica Consultants decided to provide the factual responses to questions that demand such an answer but also to focus on the emotional and ideological subtexts of the questions. They circulated their first draft, “Factors in the Concerns (*Inquietudes*) of Adolescents on Human Development,”<sup>78</sup> to peer reviewers widely. The draft contained long discussions of the most common questions. Certainly one of the reasons that SERNAM decided not to release the manual<sup>79</sup> is that some of the “factual” responses were sexually explicit while the discussion of the subtexts of the questions often countered the religious norms espoused by the conservatives. (See Table 4.4 below.)

The document finally released by SERNAM included only the most common questions without the discussion prepared by the consultants. It constituted a minor improvement in the process since it gave the organizing committee and community resource people advance notice of the types of questions they would most likely confront and more time to do research and think about possible answers in advance. However, the suppression of

**Table 4.4**  
**Examples of the Questions and Answers in “Inquietudes”**

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<p>What is masturbation? Is it bad? Why do people masturbate?</p>	<p>[Factual discussion]: Masturbation is not bad; it is a way to learn about our sexuality. Its function is exploratory . . . . It prepares one to feel, think about and live adult sexuality. Masturbation is neither perverted nor depraved but rather a natural way to confront an unknown and emerging impulse. There is no danger in masturbating.</p> <p>[Subtext discussion]: These images of perversion and sickness create a lot of tension for adolescents . . . with regard to a practice that is not only legitimate but much more extensively practiced than is usually acknowledged.</p>
<p>What is the best method to avoid pregnancy?</p>	<p>[Factual discussion]: Ideally, avoiding pregnancy should be a concern shared by both members of the couple. . . . A woman should seek professional help (doctor or midwife) to choose the best method.</p> <p>[Subtext discussion]: Highlight why it is not convenient to make this solely women’s responsibility. Remind participants that there is no one method that is good for everyone, which is why professional advice is important. The first method to avoid pregnancy is sexual abstinence . . . the second is to use contraceptive methods. (Next page in document gives a short description of each method.)</p> <p>[Author’s note: The response also highlights questions that reflect common myths about pregnancy prevention methods, i.e. douching, drinking a glass of water immediately afterwards, or having relations while standing.]</p>
<p>Is there any risk of getting pregnant from swallowing semen?</p>	<p>There is no way that swallowing semen could result in pregnancy.</p>

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the full training document eliminated an opportunity to expose community resource people and all participants to diverse points of views on the most common questions. Several interviewees<sup>80</sup> confirmed that in fact this draft document was circulating unofficially throughout Chile among health professionals and was used in some of the JOCAS thanks to the subversive possibilities of electronic mail and the copy machine. Once again, private choices were enhanced while official roads were blocked.

### *A Student Essay Contest*

The second controversial incident in 1999 involved a student essay contest run by SERNAM on experiences during the JOCAS. The SERNAM official who organized the contest, Gabriela Pischedda, guided the contest plans through the multisectoral process, only to have MINEDUC demand it be terminated after a media outlet gave unfavorable publicity to the contest. The announcements of the contest had already been sent to all Chilean secondary schools, and the forty students who had sent in essays were told that the contest was cancelled. Pischedda was removed from all responsibility for the JOCCAS after this incident.<sup>81</sup> The roots of the incident arose more from multisectoral dynamics than from the nature of the idea itself<sup>82</sup> and perhaps could have been avoided if the Ministry of Education had been fully participating in the committee. Again, it was media publicity—the eruption of sexuality education content into the public space—that had the ultimate effect of silencing the free expression of young people.

### **Multisectoral Dynamics and Demonizing the Health Sector**

The multisectoral nature of the JOCAS program was one of its greatest strengths but also gave rise to persistent tensions. SERNAM, the convening agency, is itself multisectoral in nature, with education, economic development and health initiatives favoring women under its auspices. Since it does not have sufficient staff to implement programs, it is perennially in the delicate position of having to stimulate initiatives and generate cooperation among other ministries to implement programs.<sup>83</sup> Tension in the multisectoral committee that gave rise to the JOCAS were exacerbated by the Chilean government's lack of administrative norms to encourage such efforts. Because schools belong to the education sector, and hospitals and clinics to the health sector, the JOCAS broke the territorial boundaries.

The midwife's entrance into the school to carry out a school-wide activity on sexuality rather than vaccinations has been a turning point for both sectors: [the midwife] left the space in which she habitually carries out her role, and [the school] opened the doors of its territory.<sup>84</sup>

According to one official, some of the animosity between the two sectors arises from the higher social status of health professionals vis-à-vis educators. The Catholic Church's principal negotiator with the Ministry of Education, Archbishop Cox, referred to the authority conferred on the health professional: "They come [into the school] in their white uniforms, and it is as if they were wearing a crown; no one disagrees with what they say."<sup>85</sup>

The controversies that erupted in 1996 aggravated existing tensions within the Multisectoral Committee, resulting in MINEDUC assuming complete control of the JOCAS and their funding. MINEDUC even refused a small

amount available from UNFPA in order to avoid any committee oversight.<sup>86</sup> MINEDUC felt it had no authority over health personnel while MINSAL had none over teachers or school directors. Thus, a result of the dust-up was a reinforcement of these strict sectoral boundaries. Many people accused MINEDUC of “taking the ball home.”

Once MINEDUC assumed sole responsibility for the JOCAS, their representatives greatly reduced their attendance at the biweekly committee meetings<sup>87</sup> and were backed up in doing so by the minister.<sup>88</sup> Probably, this reduced involvement was also related to the committee members’ anger about the changes in the 1997 JOCAS. The Multisectoral Committee, led by SERNAM, shifted its focus to the community-based JOCCAS based in municipalities.

Although it would seem that the Catholic Church Secretariat’s seal of approval of the amended JOCAS in 1997 should have ended the controversy, socially conservative sectors continued to view the JOCAS with suspicion precisely because of their distrust of the health sector. The program’s opponents then focused on reducing or eliminating the participation of MINSAL personnel in the program by accusing them of imparting “biological” information with no references to morals or values. Given the control of Chilean newspapers by conservative groups, this anti-MINSAL campaign easily found voice in the media (see Box 4.3).

A review of newspaper articles associated with the 1996 polemics illustrates why conservative columnists and religious leaders cast the health sector as the

#### Box 4.3

##### Quotes from the Chilean Media Regarding Health Professionals in 1996

[Public health] is not preserved by throwing out all healthy moral criteria . . . nor by systematic lies, such as selling “safe sex” to young people when such a thing does not exist. . . . They sell them a false security in the condom preventing AIDS, and they distribute [condoms] to them without telling them what the research says, that there is up to a 30 percent failure rate. (Interview with Cardinal Alfonso López Trujillo by Pilar Molina, “Programas de Educación Sexual, Recetas ‘Boomerang,’” *El Mercurio*, October 6, 1996.)

Why do a bunch of educators get together with the children to inform them about sex . . . and not inform them of the most essential fact: that at their age, sex is not good for them, it harms them? . . . The answer is simple: the JOCAS education is a disguise, and the teachers’ members of the chorus for the real hidden protagonist: the Ministry of Health. The Ministry does not care whether or not the children are having sex so long as they use contraceptives because they believe that this is the way to decrease the incidence of AIDS, adolescent pregnancies and abortions. They are mistaken in this belief. (Gonzalo Vial Correa, “Agacharse, callarse y esperar que pase la tempestad” in *La Segunda*, cited in Agencia de Recortes Prensa–Cor, September 24, 1996.)

villain. Numerous religious and conservative opponents cited the typical scenario of a midwife from the local health clinic showing young people how to use contraception and encouraging them to use their confidential services. The articles also illustrate a common tendency among conservative religious forces to exaggerate condom failure rates. The commentators suggested that the JOCAS were a cover for MINSAL'S intentions to provide contraceptives without parental consent to students in alliance with pharmaceutical giants, who were eager to expand the contraceptive market. One book by Father Jaime Fernández of the Family Vicariate—*JOCAS: The Tip of the Iceberg*—expanded on the Malthusian conspiracy theory enunciated by one bishop at the height of the 1996 controversies and cast MINSAL as the dupe of forces seeking to reduce Chile's population:

Bishop Caro said Chile is being manipulated by powerful political forces, namely the World Health Organization, the United States and other industrialized nations: “[T]hey want to promote the sale of contraceptives[, so they] send their leftover condoms and birth control. There is a powerful economic and political campaign to diminish the family in our countries because the First World countries, which no longer have children, see that our countries, which have more children, keep growing, and they are going to lose their political hegemony.”<sup>89</sup>

After the essay contest controversy there was intense behind-the-scenes lobbying against the participation of MINSAL personnel. The Ministers of SERNAM and Education met in late 1998 and agreed on a reduced Multi-sectoral Committee with the full participation of MINEDUC once again but with fewer participants from MINSAL. This negotiation resulted in the withdrawal from the committee of Dr. Raquel Child, director of CONASIDA (the National AIDS Commission), and Dr. René Castro, director of the Women's Health Program. The only representative of MINSAL left was Dr. Miguel Angel González, the Director of Adolescent Health Services.

Through this process of demonization of the health sector as lacking “values” and encouraging promiscuity among adolescents by offering them condoms, the JOCAS lost key input at the national level. Child notes that health personnel were advocating for better training of the resource people.

Why don't they want the topic of HIV/AIDS and Raquel Child on the [multi-sectoral] commission? Because we bring up issues they do not want to deal with. When we talk about HIV transmission, we are talking about very concrete behaviors that we all engage in, but they do not want to talk about this. It is much easier to say, “Oh, those poor 14–15-year-old adolescents who get pregnant and have children.”...When we opposed changing the JOCAS model, when we pointed out that the community resource people needed training...we were punished.<sup>90</sup>

The government's reactions to the controversies transformed the JOCAS from a multisectoral initiative into two separate programs: one based in schools and directed by MINEDUC and community-based JOCCAS directed by SERNAM, with diminished participation from the MINSAL leaders in both. However, while the conflicts reduced cooperation on the national level, the health sector continued to participate actively in all the events at the local level, both in schools and community activities.

### **ISSUES IN PARTICIPATORY SEXUALITY EDUCATION MODELS**

There is a rich store of lessons for sexuality educators around the world from the experiences of JOCAS in Chilean schools, JOCCAS in the community and replications of both in many other countries.<sup>91</sup> Some of these reflections on the JOCAS are pertinent to all sexuality education interventions based on bottom-up, participatory methodology.

#### **Resistance to Conservative Attacks, and Potential for Control and Censorship**

Conservative opposition to sexuality education tends to focus on the content of official educational materials and on ensuring control over the program by parents and principals. On both counts, the JOCAS program proved to be relatively resistant to attacks. The program has no official educational materials; the manuals describe a methodology and have no health content. In addition, both parental involvement and participation from religious or community leaders to comment on values are key aspects of the model. However, securing the participation of these groups proved to be challenging and not very successful in practice.<sup>92</sup>

JOCAS is a useful model for socially conservative settings precisely because conversations in small peer-led groups are hard to censor and because their impact relies on the power of informal, yet profound, conversation. Textbooks or written curricula usually run the risk of censorship in societies where issues related to sexuality are contentious. It is symptomatic of such settings that none of the Chilean ministries involved in the JOCAS/JOCCAS ever produced sexuality education materials.

The potential for censorship in the model arises precisely in the second workshop, in the moment when students engage in a dialogue with community resource people who respond to their questions. As mentioned above, the principal could aim for pluralism in choosing the resource people and encouraging the exchange of diverse views in instructions to these people. Alternatively, he or she could "play tricks on the model" and aim for homogenous viewpoints by limiting the discussion to pre-approved topics and opinions. In addition, there are known examples of some principals



entirely cutting out the third workshop where participants interchange ideas and engage in creative expression “to avoid problematic situations.”<sup>93</sup>

The mode of censorship does not always rely on principals. One education official noted that in the meetings of the resource people after observing the first workshop, some decide in advance how to respond to a question in the second workshop so that they do not publicly air their disagreements. As noted previously, this would weaken the model, because the JOCAS program theory holds that the process of discernment cannot take place without the young people being exposed to diverse views.

Catholic leaders showed striking inconsistencies in their support for the airing of diverse views in the JOCAS. Decentralization and respect for diversity allows religious schools to run JOCAS programs that fit their values. Accordingly, Archbishop Francisco Cox, a prominent protagonist in the history of the JOCAS, explained the Catholic hierarchy’s support for the decentralization that characterizes the JOCAS: “Freedom [of each school to choose what kind of sex education program to deliver] is a risk because one cannot be sure that each school will carry out a good project, but it is worth taking the chance. The alternative is that each elected government mandates which values Chileans ought to have.”<sup>94</sup>

This expression of support for freedom of choice by each school clashes with remarks by many conservative critics (including a remark by Cox in the same article) stating that only one statement of values should be presented to young people. The real conservative view is that the government should indeed impose values—theirs—by not allowing contraceptive information and services to young people. Catholic leaders only supported the freedom to espouse *their* values and certainly not the value of respect for the individual conscience of the young person that forms the foundation of the JOCAS.

### ***Solutions to Potential for Censorship***

Most of the solutions consist of complementary interventions. The Ministry of Health could subsidize free educational materials for young people in health clinics and in pharmacies. In Chile and in other countries where students have access to the Internet, web-based information can be made available as a complement to the JOCAS. A ministry could also subsidize several NGOs to distribute their sexuality education materials for free in community fairs held where school-based JOCAS have taken place.

### **Imposing Standards on Participatory Models**

How, in a completely participatory, decentralized program model, can sexuality education program directors ensure quality and effectiveness and guarantee that beneficiaries have access to complete sexual and reproductive health information? How can they avoid having participants simply reflect the

prevailing social norms and level of ignorance? Is guidance necessary to promote gender equity and to question the sexual double standard that poses risks for both young men and young women?

Proponents of the JOCAS argue that concepts of gender equity and reproductive and sexual rights are usually represented in the group discussions and that as a result the process of discernment takes these new health-protective points of view into account. However, despite the rapid modernization of many societies, the Chilean experience shows that there is no guarantee that these concepts will be represented in the conversations. The plurality of points of view expressed depends on the choice of resource people and on the level of diversity of opinion allowed by school principals, as also on the existence of multiple viewpoints within the school community. Some of the key JOCAS trainers have experimented with different variations of the model in recent years precisely because they found that too many of the conversations—including those led by students—did not contain diverse viewpoints. Mere youth involvement in a program does not guarantee diversity or openness of mind.

Those in charge of implementing the JOCAS point to the preliminary training as the key entry point for guaranteeing fidelity to the model and introducing new ideas to those who will lead them. To ensure standard methodology, MINEDUC produced a series of training manuals and formed training teams in each region. Each training workshop included organizing committees from several schools and consisted of experiencing a JOCAS run by the ministry trainers, followed by an evaluation session.

Ximena Barria of SERNAM described how the SERNAM training teams found opportunities to promote attention to gender issues by injecting new ideas into the participatory evaluation process at the end of the training. A MINEDUC official described a similar process:

We promote gender issues in two ways: first, ensuring that women, both young and adult, participate equally in the organizing committee and in leadership of the event. Second, we use opportunities during the training of the resource people and the organizing committee. . . . The dialogue during evaluation allows us to remind people that some behavior that we have learned is based on discrimination against women.

One journalist's account of an incident during a training for the modified JOCAS—after the changes introduced after the 1996 controversies—sheds light on how the training sessions worked to counter social conservatism and to guarantee young people's right to information on sexual and reproductive health.

In Los Andes one group of students asked about contraceptive methods, and the educational and pastoral agents [priests] there refused to respond. The Ministry of Education trainers intervened, pointing out that the basic rule of this "game"

is honesty. The agents must respond to questions with the truth. María de la Luz Silva, the general coordinator of the JOCAS [in MINEDUC] explained that . . . hiding or negating information [is not permitted] because access to information is guaranteed by the rights of the child.<sup>95</sup>

However, the extremely decentralized implementation of the JOCAS in each school increased the chances for distortions in the model. One evaluation noted the extremely uneven participation of students and parents in the organizing committees and the almost complete absence of community resource people.<sup>96</sup> All respondents noted that the quality of the interventions of the community resource people was uneven, sometimes dogmatic or even including incorrect information. Since most resource people did not attend the trainings, this mechanism for improving quality did not work for them. A frequent comment from resource people landing in the middle of a process for which they were not sufficiently prepared was, “How can we respond to these questions when even we [the supposed ‘experts’] don’t have the answers?”<sup>97</sup>

As described earlier, some of the internal controversies emerging during the JOCAS program centered precisely on the issue of training those responsible for answering young people’s questions. However, it proved politically impossible for the State to suggest concrete answers to students’ questions in any official training manual.

While the government could not guarantee quality of information or stop directors from “playing tricks on the model,” perhaps the key benefit of the JOCAS simply came from the methodology itself—from breaking the silence around sexuality and stimulating conversations among peers and between the young people and adults. This intervention in itself created an atmosphere in which the participants—adult and young—actively asked questions and sought information, which in turn stimulated more and better conversations in the future.

However, young participants in the JOCAS at schools where certain topics were censored were deprived of their right to information that would protect their health. In a completely decentralized program, the completeness and the quality of the information provided to youth depend on the adults in control: on their choice of resource people, on whether to veto topics, on the level of free expression that they will allow.

The appropriate solutions for this challenge of ensuring the quality of information and counseling provided in sexuality education programs are similar to those cited in the previous section on censorship: finding alternative channels for information and disseminating information widely among both adults and young people. The solution that MINEDUC devised, “certifying” certain NGOs as sources of training and information and giving schools the contact information for these NGOs, would have worked if the schools had had the financial resources to hire the NGOs or to buy

their manuals. Even while the program was still running in 1999, the follow-up funds were only available through a competitive process and were not sufficient for the demand.<sup>98</sup>

### **AFTER THE JOCAS: POLITICAL BARRIERS TO SUSTAINABILITY**

The JOCAS model has many benefits and advantages, including ease and low cost of replication. It effectively breaks the silence surrounding sexuality, and the training tools are readily available. It is appropriate for socially conservative settings because it puts control over the program in the hands of the school or a municipality and does not impose content from national authorities. Its reliance on semiprivate conversations makes it difficult to censor. The JOCAS model encourages youth protagonism and leadership and democratizes the setting in which it is held. The experience almost universally generates enthusiasm and support from those participating, most importantly students and their parents. Complementary interventions can compensate for the weaknesses in the model outlined above, and in fact most of the “second-generation JOCAS”<sup>99</sup> include such interventions. For these reasons, the model has been replicated in many other countries and venues, including a worldwide Boy Scout jamboree. In Chile, JOCAS continue to be held without an official government program,<sup>100</sup> and the methodology has been applied to other topics such as drug abuse, violence prevention and environmental protection.

Given all of these advantages and the popularity of the program, why was the JOCAS program discontinued? The Ricardo Lagos government—elected in 2000—did not renew the program even though Lagos himself expressed his support for the JOCAS and for sexuality education during his campaign. The JOCAS manual was on the Ministry of Education web site until 2004,<sup>101</sup> but there was no support for training school teams for new JOCAS. These developments disillusioned many observers who had expected that a government led by the Socialist Party would be more progressive on sexual and reproductive health issues than the former governments led by the Christian Democrats.

The stakeholders interviewed in this study offered several hypotheses for the decision to halt the JOCAS and JOCCAS programs. Certainly, continuing controversies and the difficulties of multisectoral coordination wore down those involved. The conflicts within the Multisectoral Committee and the withdrawal of three of the members most committed to the program (Gabriela Pischedda of SERNAM and Drs. Child and Castro of MINSAL) weakened the program. Even though the incoming SERNAM officials in 2000 had leftover funds from UNFPA to continue the JOCCAS, they decided not to use them.<sup>102</sup> Both advocates and critics acknowledge that the JOCAS by themselves—as one-time (but possibly annual) events—are

not sufficient to meet the sexual and reproductive health education needs of young people; technical advisors in the incoming administration in 2000 may have turned official attention to the need to design a more comprehensive, sustained program. However, those closest to decision-making levels suggest that the political costs of public controversies were an important factor in undercutting the JOCAS, through their effect on the priority-setting process within the Ministries.

The decisions of the incoming ministers of the Lagos government in 2000 were a natural extension of a process that had already begun under the previous government. The political will to support the program was highest in the 1995–1997 period when the President, Minister Bilbao of SERNAM and Minister Molina of MINEDUC<sup>103</sup> all strongly and publicly defended the JOCAS from external attacks and decided to continue with the program. However, as time went on, opponents eroded the program's financial support base from within. The low priority of the JOCAS was made clear to María de la Luz Silva who, as the person in charge in MINEDUC in 1998, had to scramble to secure funding for the program just as it was increasing in popularity.

There was no real explanation. It was just that these [extra] funds were cut as the natural result of adjusting budgets because no special program had received any increases. It was a completely innocuous response framed as part of general bureaucratic decision-making. So the JOCAS continued but with a much lower profile than they should have had given the demand.<sup>104</sup>

Without sufficient budgetary support for the increasing demand for JOCAS, the resources devoted to training fell and probably the quality of the training as well. Silva speculates that these minimally funded JOCAS in 1998 and 1999 had less impact than those in 1996 and 1997, which were the object of all of the evaluation studies.

Mariana Aylwin, the incoming Minister of Education in 2000, explains the decisions on the JOCAS program as a minor part of the complex exercise of setting priorities in a scenario in which budgets were being reduced while core costs were rising.<sup>105</sup> Aylwin was criticized for the elimination of the Women's Program, but she viewed this decision simply as part of a general effort to mainstream multiple, uncoordinated special programs under a common umbrella.

These comments point out the complexity of policy decision-making and lead to what may be the real issue—the effect of political controversies on priority setting. If a decision-maker has to choose between a special program that gives rise to conflicts with other ministries and media criticism and the core, noncontroversial activities of a ministry on the other, the likely choice is obvious. “Special” projects or programs with separate line items in budgets may be more vulnerable to cuts, suggesting that ultimately, the way forward for sex education programs is mainstreaming into the core curriculum.

Silva commented:

All scandals generate high political costs for the ministers involved. . . . To implement programs of this kind—with conflictive issues and strong, opposing social actors—there must be POLITICAL WILL, not only from the President but also from the Ministers who are putting their heads on the line. . . . There are always many initiatives that enjoy social consensus, like addressing poverty and unemployment. Democracies generate a lot of demands, and a conflictive demand related to young people does not always make it to the highest priority level.<sup>106</sup>

The political context for the Lagos government's decisions on sexuality education is certainly relevant. The *Concertación* feared that it would lose the next election in 2006 to the right-wing coalition, because Lagos barely squeaked by to win in a runoff in 1999. For electoral purposes, it is certainly safer to do nothing that would arouse further opposition from the Catholic bishops. Related decisions of the Lagos government in 2000 suggest that the issue of reducing political costs associated with controversy was central. For example, at SERNAM's initiative, the Multisectoral Commission took the words "Sex Education" out of its title and became the "Commission to End Adolescent Pregnancy."<sup>107</sup> The supposed successor to the JOCAS is a new program entitled "Responsible Sexuality," which never expanded beyond the pilot stage. Then the Ministry of Education commissioned a study on "education in sexuality," released in February 2004, in order to decide on the next steps, none of which are apparent on the MINEDUC web site.<sup>108</sup>

It seems duplicitous—and indicative of failure to implement a successor to the JOCAS—that two years after MINEDUC and SERNAM stopped supporting the JOCAS, the Chilean government continued to tout these programs as evidence that it was meeting its obligations to protect adolescents' health under international law. The Chilean government wrote the following response to the Committee for Convention on the Rights of the Child on April 3, 2002, to address the Committee's concerns about adolescents' sexual and reproductive health and about HIV/AIDS education in Chile:

Since 1995 the Government has been running an multisectoral program on prevention of adolescent pregnancies that holds discussion sessions on emotional relationships and sexuality (JOCAS) in some of the country's schools. . . . These sessions are a voluntary option for the school. . . . The Ministry encourages the holding of the. . . JOCAS, which encourage debate on [HIV/AIDS] in the school community."<sup>109</sup>

Certainly, sex education initiatives in the Lagos government were designed to protect young people's sexual and reproductive health more completely than the JOCAS did, in ongoing programs as opposed to one-time events. Are they an improvement over the JOCAS? While a full answer lies beyond the scope of this study, there are indications that these programs also suffer

from lack of political commitment, insufficient attention and resources. They have a much lower profile and lower coverage than the JOCAS, less media attention, and seem to be applied unevenly or infrequently in schools.

The first initiative began in the 1990s and consists of guidelines to mainstream sexuality education content as one of the “fundamental crosscutting objectives” in the new national curricula for primary and secondary school.<sup>110</sup> The modules for each major curricular area include content and participatory exercises related to sexuality education (including issues related to self-esteem, relationships and life skills). However, MINEDUC does not evaluate whether or not the “transversal” objectives related to sexuality are being implemented. Inclusion of the modules is not mandatory, and it is impossible to know whether they are being used at all. The ministry’s supervision team only tracks implementation of the fundamental objectives of “traditional” areas of learning.<sup>111</sup> With the ministries themselves not demanding any accountability for use of the modules, and most teachers undoubtedly uncomfortable with the subject matter, it is unlikely that the modules are widely used. Mainstreaming may be the ultimate solution for universal access to comprehensive sex education, but the system has to include sufficient resources for training and accountability.

The second initiative is the Lagos government’s new Multisectoral Program—Responsible Sexuality—that began to train teachers and parents in five cities in 2001. It is yet another special program and operates through contracts with local institutions. As the program is not integrated into core operations, it is as vulnerable as the JOCAS and all other special programs to budget restraints.

The Responsible Sexuality Program encountered significant delays in getting off the ground. Once again, the first announcements in 2000 incited worried and critical articles from conservative commentators in the media, and the final document describing the program was not released until nine months later in July 2001. One observer attributed the delays to “the typical conflict within the *Concertación* about sex. Although they know it is necessary to confront the issue, they are afraid of the polemics that arise.”<sup>112</sup>

The program has not caught the imagination of the citizenry as the JOCAS did, nor has it achieved significant coverage in Chilean schools. As of the end of 2003, the program was present only in eight large municipalities around the country, involving 153 secondary schools out of approximately 1,200 nationwide, as compared to 600 for the JOCAS. Several critics say the program is even more decentralized and heterogeneous than the JOCAS since the methodology and content depend on which NGO or program is conducting the program.<sup>113</sup> A MINEDUC evaluation meeting in mid-2003 pointed out problems related to under-funding and lack of multisectoral coordination.<sup>114</sup> On one end of the spectrum, Teen Star, a well-known abstinence-only program, is one of the main beneficiaries. On the other,

the Ministry of Health and the National Youth Institute run JOCAS-like programs called “youth afternoons” (*tardes jóvenes*).<sup>115</sup>

Lamentably, this diversity in program philosophies means that there are even fewer guarantees of fulfillment of young people’s rights to health, participation and free expression than there were under the JOCAS. The leadership role for young people, which was guaranteed in the JOCAS methodology, now depends on the philosophy of the NGO or institution that wins the contract for a particular neighborhood or community. Under the JOCAS, the lack of guarantees for the quality of information provided to young people stemmed from the principle of local control; some school directors “played tricks on the model” to exercise censorship. Under the Responsible Sexuality Program, the communities covered by the Teen Star Program have censorship built in. Teen Star is an abstinence-only program that does not provide information on contraception for those who are sexually active.<sup>116</sup> While neither the JOCAS nor the Responsible Sexuality Program guarantee provision of the information and counselling that youth need, the JOCAS methodology at least assured a completely participatory process with the locus of control in the school and the community. In the Responsible Sexuality Program, the outside institutions receiving the grant retain full control.

### FINAL REFLECTIONS: ACHIEVEMENTS AND FAILURES

Both optimistic and pessimistic narratives could interpret this story of the rise and demise of the JOCAS. Both are true; the glass is half-empty and half-full.

The positive interpretation is that the end of the government program has not ended the JOCAS. Its low cost, easy replicability, and enthusiastic reception have meant that many spontaneous JOCAS and JOCCAS-like variants continue to occur throughout Chile. All of these JOCAS-based models still rest on the fundamental premise of the transformative power of conversations. Civil society and the schools themselves have taken over; several organizations and consultants continue to promote “second-generation” JOCAS and JOCCAS.<sup>117</sup> Many of these models count on multiple interventions in a given setting to increase the chances of resonance in the community and to solve the problems of censorship and uneven information quality that beset the school-based JOCAS. Many observers also agree that schools continue to hold JOCAS without any significant support from the ministry although there are no systems in place to register how often this occurs. For those school districts that chose not to participate during 1996–1999 or whose request for training could not be met, this independent replication is unlikely.

Several of those who implemented the JOCAS program believe that the impact of the program on Chilean society and the school system is significant and irreversible. Before the JOCAS, many schools either had little or no



sexuality education. Through the JOCAS hundreds of school directors and teachers shed their reluctance to engage in sexuality education; the conversations in the JOCAS made it acceptable to talk about sexuality and helped them to understand the need for it. They realized students could take leadership within the school and organize educational activities.

However, Silva comments that the state still is failing to protect the most vulnerable young people's right to health:

The topic of sexuality is now present in the schools, and currently only the worst schools or the most conservative private ones do not address sexuality education. . . . There is no going backwards even though progress is uneven, and what happens now depends more on the schools and the families . . . than on the Ministry [of Education] or SERNAM. This is positive because the schools are free to do what they want. On the other hand, in some schools this is a serious problem because it is the poorest children, those who most need state protection, who end up with no sexual and reproductive health education.

Despite the probable advances, a far more pessimistic reading of the current situation is also possible.<sup>118</sup> Clearly, the Chilean government could do better. The JOCAS experience demonstrates that MINEDUC is technically capable of scaling up a comprehensive sexuality education program with close to universal coverage of the 1,200 secondary schools. The public health system is one of the most effective and highest coverage systems in the hemisphere, so that health professionals to participate in the JOCAS would not be lacking.

Nevertheless, after the government's initial courageous public support for the JOCAS, political will faltered. Behind the scenes, the half-hearted support, the compromises and the bureaucratic obstacles that faced the JOCAS reflect a lack of commitment to protect the health of young people who are sexually active. Between controversies in the media and pressures from the Catholic Church, the political costs of getting serious about this issue are high when authorities insist on providing comprehensive and factual sexual and reproductive health information and education to the young as a bottom-line bargaining position with conservatives.

Local control of the JOCAS meant that socially conservative local authorities had the power to deprive young people of the education and counseling they needed. To counter this problem, the government should have provided enough funding to provide good quality training to a full organizing committee at each school for all of the schools that requested this support with reference materials for the community resource people. Finally, the nature of the JOCAS as a single event demands follow up steps and programs in each school to build on the openness and enthusiasm generated by the conversation workshops. These were not sponsored or funded.

Through lack of political will and fear of controversy, the Chilean government lost a valuable and perhaps unique opportunity to fulfill young peoples'

right to education to protect their health. The widespread popularity of the JOCAS and the enthusiasm that they generated created a political opportunity to implement follow-up programs in the participating schools. Failing to seize this opportunity led to backsliding: the lack of follow-up support for schools that held JOCAS, the failure to promote sexuality education among schools that did not have JOCAS, the lack of monitoring of the Sexuality Frameworks in MINEDUC curricula, and the unevenness and low coverage of the multisectoral program that followed the JOCAS.

While many believe that coverage and availability of sexuality education has improved in Chile, there seems to be no reliable data to support this belief. In any case, the final health outcomes do not seem to have improved. The rate of increase in HIV infections has not slowed, and the adolescent fertility rate in 2000 was only slightly lower than in 1980.<sup>119</sup>

Like so many other excellent sexuality education programs worldwide, the JOCAS program was a victim of failure of nerve among the adult duty-bearers when faced with political controversies and competing demands. One factor in this widespread failure to protect the health of the young is their political disenfranchisement: they depend on adults to speak and vote on their behalf, and these adults too often let them down. Youth participation in programs and policy is young people's human right and could help to overcome these political barriers. It is commonly accepted wisdom in the youth development field that governments and programs should involve young people themselves in setting the priorities and design for programs to benefit them. Surely, if Chile's young people had had any say in the fate of the JOCAS, the program would have flourished, and continued to this day.

## NOTES

1. This case uses the terms "young people," "youth," and "adolescents" interchangeably, because the students involved in the JOCAS are in high schools and in an age range that fits into most definitions of all three terms. Various international agencies use somewhat different definitions and age ranges for the terms. Most commonly accepted are the WHO definitions: ages ten to twenty-four for "young people" and ages ten to nineteen for "adolescents." "Youth"—a UN term—is ages fifteen to twenty-four.

2. WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, 1995.

3. These meetings were called to review the Programme of Action adopted by consensus at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994.

4. Discussions at this session were especially acrimonious. Only after sustained arguments were the words "reproductive and sexual health" included in clause 24 of the document, "A World Fit for Children"; accessed on November 1, 2005: [http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/docs\\_new/documents/A-RES-S27-2E.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/docs_new/documents/A-RES-S27-2E.pdf).

5. See Fagan, 2001, for a full exposition of the conservative view toward interpretations of the CRC and CEDAW that support sexual and reproductive rights of young people and women.

6. E/C.12/2000/4 11 August 2000; accessed on January 29, 2006: [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/40d009901358b0e2c1256915005090be?Opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/40d009901358b0e2c1256915005090be?Opendocument).

7. *Jornadas de Conversación sobre Afectividad y Sexualidad* (“JOCAS” is pronounced “hō’-kûs”).

8. Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Anuario de Estadísticas Vitales. Cited without details in SERNAM policy brief from 2000, and the 40,000 figure was quoted by several of those interviewed. The age range referred to is probably fifteen to nineteen.

9. In 1998 the rate for fifteen- to nineteen-year-olds was 70.2 for every 1,000 women of fertile age. Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, Anuario de Estadísticas Vitales, 1998. Quoted on a regional adolescent sexual health web site set up by UNFPA and Guernica Consultores in Chile; accessed February 24, 2005: [http://www.sexualidadjoven.cl/indicadores/ind\\_chile.htm#fec](http://www.sexualidadjoven.cl/indicadores/ind_chile.htm#fec). The rest of the statistics in this paragraph and in the table are from the same source.

10. Chile finally passed and promulgated a divorce law in 2004.

11. From a personal communication from María de la Luz Silva in 2003:

Chile was quite a liberal country in the region until 1973. For example . . . lay education was introduced quite early, with the political triumph of the Popular Front in the 30s, which was an alliance between the Communist Party and lay liberalism. [the front also had] a strong masonic influence, represented by the Radical Party, which was in power for many years, modernizing and democratizing the country. That is why I think that [one could say that] the conservative tendency, linked to the old dominant classes in Chile and which was subordinated during these progressive governments, was reinstalled by the military, transforming itself into the hegemonic power.

12. There has been an important generational change in the Catholic Church hierarchy since the height of influence of liberation theology in the 1960s and 1970s. The bishops and cardinals that were appointed by John Paul II are much more socially and politically conservative than the previous generation; see Chapter 1, in the section on the Catholic Church and Divorce Law in Chile, for a more complete description of the situation.

13. State party (Chile) report to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. CRC/C/3/Add.18 June 22, 1993.

14. “Article 24: 1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. States Parties shall strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services. 2. States Parties shall pursue full implementation of this right and, in particular, shall take appropriate measures. . . . (f) To develop preventive health care, guidance for parents and family planning education and services.” Accessed in March 2005: <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm>.

15. There is still no policy *mandating* schools to allow these young women to continue their studies.

16. Ministry of Education, Chile, 1993 and 2001.

17. Quotes in this and the following paragraph are from the field notes of the author's interview with María de la Luz Silva, June 1999. Silva was a member of the original design team of the JOCAS as Director of the Ministry of Education's Women's Program, and she was in charge of the JOCAS within the ministry.

18. Ministry of Education, 1993 and 2001, Chapter 3, Section 1.1, last paragraph.

19. I am indebted to Tim Frasca for his observations on this point in the 2003 draft.

20. According to a 2003 communication from Maria de la Luz Silva, until December of 1989 the school curriculum was national in scope and schools followed the ministry's lead. The dictatorship pushed through the constitutional change. The reasons for this change are beyond the scope of this study, but the military probably sought to ensure greater "academic freedom" for conservative or religious schools under a democratic government. As the Ministry of Education policy (MINEDUC 1993 and 2001) points out, this constitutional change brought much greater heterogeneity to the curricula in Chilean schools.

21. Gabriela Pischedda of SERNAM convened the committee, and Maria de la Luz Silva of MINEDUC took the lead in developing the school-based model of the JOCAS. Other members of this initial committee who took part in the development of the model included Dr. Rene Castro, the director of the Women's Health Program in MINSAL, Dr. Raquel Child, the director of CONASIDA, and a representative of the INJ.

22. Rodrigo Vera, then a member of the UNFPA regional technical support team, represented the main donor for the program and had developed this conversational model as an educational tool for empowerment and democratization of pedagogy with teachers under the government of Salvador Allende and during the years of the dictatorship. In 1994 and 1995, turning to the field of adolescent health, he adapted the model in pilot community-based JOCAS in two states in Mexico. He proposed this model to the Chilean committee, which reacted with enthusiasm. Since then, he has adapted the JOCAS models in several other countries.

23. The evaluations of the first pilots were process evaluations and monitoring reports examining implementation issues and the content of conversations. See Canales et al., 1997.

24. Luz María Pérez Infante and Pablo Mecklenburg Bravo, "MECE-High School Youth Component," English translation of Chapter 7 of *La Reforma Educacional Chilena*, edited by Juan Eduardo Garcia-Huidobro, Madrid: Editorial Popular, 1999, 4.

25. V. Espinoza and P. Aguirre, 1999; Kleincsek et al., 1998; and Abatte and Arriagada, 1998. Through various programs, MINEDUC covered the financial costs of the JOCAS. In 1996 and 1997 UNFPA supported training of health personnel to participate in the JOCAS, some of the materials and an evaluation.

26. Personal communication from María de la Luz Silva, November 2003.

27. According to preelectoral public opinion polls taken in late 1998; interviews with Gabriela Pischedda, the original Women's Ministry (SERNAM) representative to the JOCAS design team, and Ximena Barría of SERNAM.

28. There is no mention at all of JOCCAS on the SERNAM web site, accessed in 2003 and again in 2005 at <http://www.sernam.cl/index.php>.

29. JOCAS is the acronym for the school-based model and JOCCAS for the community-based model. Although there are important differences between the two, this section refers to basic elements of the model common to both. The content of this section is mainly taken from two versions of the Ministry of Education manual: Arriagada et al., 1997 and Abatte et al., 1999.

30. These paragraphs synthesize conversations with and documents written by Rodrigo Vera of UNFPA.

31. Hereafter, this article will refer to the "JOCAS," but some comments are relevant to both the school-based and community-based models. When referring specifically to one or the other, the text will make this clear.

32. Personal communication, Rodrigo Vera, 2002. The designers were influenced by the work of Anthony Giddens, which is summarized by David Gauntlett: "In post-traditional times, however, we don't really worry about the precedents set by previous generations, and options are at least as open as the law and public opinion will allow. All questions of how to behave in society then become matters that we have to consider and make decisions about. Society becomes much more *reflexive* and aware of its own precariously constructed state." Gauntlett, *Media, Gender and Identity: An Introduction*, Routledge: New York, 2002. (Extracts accessed in September 2003: [www.theory.org.uk](http://www.theory.org.uk).)

33. Cox was later elevated to archbishop but then defrocked in 2003 for years of sexual abuse of underage boys. He cannot reenter Chilean territory for fear of prosecution.

34. "Como hablar de 'eso' sin hablar mucho de 'eso': Las remozadas Jocas del '97" (How to talk about "that" without talking much about "that": The rejuvenated Jocas of 1997) in Chilean newspaper *La Tercera*, *Reportajes* section, August 3, 1997.

35. Transcript from interview by the author with Rosario del Solar, Ministry of Education.

36. Abatte et al., *Texto Guía de Autogestión*, 1999, 120.

37. Dr. Raquel Child, interview by Alvaro Böhme of Guernica Consultores in September of 2000, *Desarrollo Humano Adolescente*; accessed in October 2005: [http://www.sexualidadjoven.cl/diagnostico/diag\\_raquelchild.htm](http://www.sexualidadjoven.cl/diagnostico/diag_raquelchild.htm).

38. Transcript from interview by the author with Rosario del Solar, Ministry of Education.

39. WHO, UNFPA and UNICEF, 1995, 6. In some items, the wording has been amplified for clarity.

40. The data in the following table is drawn from the study interviews, and from the evaluation of the school-based JOCAS carried out in 1997; see Espinoza and Aguirre, 1999.

41. V. Espinoza and P. Aguirre, 1999; Kleincsek et al., 1999; and Abatte and Arriagada, 1998.

42. Kleincsek et al., 1999 was carried out by EDUK. The survey had a 58 percent response rate that overrepresented the results from Santiago, the capital. This was a retrospective post-test only design so that the results pertain to the participants' perceptions of changes resulting from the JOCAS. It collected data as well on the participants' perceptions of change in rates of adolescent pregnancy at each school, with conflicting results.

43. V. Espinoza and P. Aguirre, 1999. Also a retrospective design.
44. The evaluation was not designed in a way that it could reliably ascertain effects on the last two indicators, that is, there was no time series analysis of STI or pregnancy rates among students, and there were no comparison or control schools. Furthermore, it would be unreasonable to expect that a short, one-shot intervention would have an effect on these health outcomes.
45. Field notes from interview with María de la Luz Silva when she was the Regional Director of the Ministry of Education, V Region.
46. Abbate and Arriagada, 1998, 94.
47. Quoted in Oróstegui et al., 1996, 89. The following quote is from the same source. The student coordinators directed the efforts of the student group facilitators and sat on the organizing committee for the JOCAS.
48. Espinoza and Aguirre, 1999, 7.
49. Kleinscek et al., 1999, 27.
50. V. Espinoza and P. Aguirre, 1999.
51. The author heard several anecdotes during interviews, and Paula Arriagada of Proyecto Contacto has found many schools in Santiago replicating the JOCAS on their own.
52. Transcript from interview by the author with Rosario Solar of MINEDUC, June 1999.
53. V. Espinoza and P. Aguirre, 1999.
54. Field notes from interview by the author with Dr. Miguel Angel González, Director, Adolescent Health Program, Ministry of Health.
55. Interview notes, Maria de la Luz Silva.
56. Interviews conducted by the author, and EDUK's evaluation.
57. Kleincsek et al., 1999, 131.
58. Kleincsek et al., 1999, 132.
59. See a literature review of school-family partnerships by the North Central Regional Education Laboratory in the United States; accessed in November 2005: <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/pidata/pi0ltrev.htm>; Lucas & Lusthaus, "At the middle and high school levels, parent involvement practices decline," 1978; Hollifield (1994) presents a number of reasons why this is so. The adolescent has a developmental need for autonomy and greater responsibility. Families often live farther from the high school and are less able to spend time there. The organization of secondary schools is more complex, and teachers have contact with larger numbers of students. Few high schools make any one teacher responsible for a small group of students. Information on student progress involves contacting four or five individuals." J. H. Hollifield, *High schools gear up to create effective school and family partnership*, Baltimore, MD: Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, Johns Hopkins University, 1994 (ERIC Document Reproduction No. ED 380 229). B. G. Lucas and C. S. Lusthaus, "The decisional participation of parents in elementary and secondary schools," *Journal of High School*, 61, No. 5 (1978): 211–220.
60. Field notes from interview by the author with Gabriela Pischedda, June 1999. Gabriela Pischedda participated in the original JOCAS design team as a representative of SERNAM.

61. Field notes from January 2000 interview with the author. Source wished to remain anonymous.

62. Two evaluators and officials from the Ministry of Education and SERNAM.

63. Especially considering that there were only 40 JOCAS during the first year that MINEDUC ran them in 1996 following the five pilot experiences in 1995.

64. Reliable information based on program data on the reasons for refusal is not available, but Silva listed several possible reasons in a private communication of November 2003: fear of controversy or political opposition; other bureaucratic reasons; programmatic overload (the “Christmas tree” phenomenon in which schools are burdened with voluntary programs); previously established sexuality education programs.

65. Field notes from interview by the author with Alejandro Stuardo, June 1999.

66. Abatte, P., P. Arriagada and G. González, *Texto Guía de Autogestión de Jornadas de Conversación sobre Afectividad y Sexualidad*, Third and final training manual on the JOCAS, Santiago, Chile: Ministry of Education, 1999. This JOCAS Manual was on the MINEDUC web site as of March 2004, but in June 2005 it is no longer there.

67. Pilar Molina, “La Nueva Educación Sexual del Estado” in *El Mercurio*, September 8, 1996. The report was based supposedly on her attendance at several JOCAS. According to a Chilean press extract from *La Epoca* of September 16, 1996, the two boys and their parents claimed that the journalist gave them the condom to hold. *El Mercurio* denied the charge. Several facts lend credence to the charge that the photo was artificially posed. First, the picture is of young boys in front of, not inside, the school, with no other students around. Second, they are primary school age, but the JOCAS was held in the secondary school. Finally, according to most accounts, midwives did provide information on contraceptives and brought with them samples of each type, but they were not allowed to distribute them.

68. Personal communication, Maria de la Luz Silva, December 1, 2003.

69. Field notes from interview by the author with Rodrigo Vera, 2000.

70. “Como hablar de ‘eso’ sin hablar mucho de ‘eso’: Las remozadas Jocas del ’97,” (How to talk about “that” without talking much about “that”: the rejuvenated Jocas of 1997) in Chilean newspaper *La Tercera*, *Reportajes* section, August 3, 1997; in Spanish, the quote is: “El día de la expresión, donde los estudiantes hacían *sketchs* para mostrar lo que sentían y lo que habían aprendido en las JOCAS, fue eliminado este año. Las escenificaciones juveniles no eran aptas para el pudor público.”

71. Espinoza and Aguirre, 1999.

72. There is no known case of a parent council vetoing the holding of a JOCAS in a school. One sex education program sponsored by the NGO CEMERA in the mid-1990s sent notes home to all parents inviting them to notify CEMERA if they did NOT want their child to participate. No notes were ever received.

73. Espinoza and Aguirre, 1999.

74. A recent draft document from WHO (2003) lists a positive relationship with parents as one of the four main protective factors for youth. Many other publications make the same point, including Greene et al., 2002, 60–62; UNICEF, 2002 and 2003; Kirby, 2002; and WHO, 1999.

75. WHO, UNFPA and UNICEF, 1995. UNICEF and WHO references, FOCUS on Young Adults.

76. See *La Tercera*, 1997; Molina, 1996; Anonymous, "Jornadas De Conversación Sobre Afectividad Y Sexualidad (Jocas): Una Evaluación A La Luz De Los Principios Cristianos"; Fagan, 2001; and Vida Humana Internacional, 1996–1997.

77. Abatte and Arriagada, 1998, 51.

78. Stuardo et al., 1998.

79. Although the content was a major issue, the document that circulated was a first draft and needed considerable editing to make it apt for its audience. SERNAM's decision not to release the manual occurred before the new government took office. The person who took the lead in drafting the document, Alejandro Stuardo, died in a tragic motorcycle accident in April 2000.

80. From the author's January 2000 visit. The author obtained her copy informally.

81. The JOCCAS were community-based versions of the JOCAS, implemented by SERNAM. She was offered another post within SERNAM but declined and submitted her resignation. From transcript of author's interview with Gabriela Pischedda.

82. Personal communication, Rodrigo Vera, 2002, and transcript of interview with Gabriela Pischedda. The problem was that the Committee had intervened in the schools without the knowledge of the Minister of Education because the MINEDUC representative had greatly reduced her attendance at the meetings. The Minister of Education was angry at being taken by surprise by the publicity.

83. Population Council and Overseas Development Council, "What Can Be Done to Foster Multisectoral Population Policies?" 1998; seminar Report accessed in November 2005: <http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/multisectoral.pdf>.

84. Abatte et al., 1999.

85. "Como hablar de 'eso' sin hablar mucho de 'eso': Las remozadas Jocas del '97," (How to talk about "that" without talking much about "that": the rejuvenated Jocas of 1997) in Chilean newspaper *La Tercera*, *Reportajes* section, August 3, 1997.

86. Church officials had also requested that SERNAM and MINSAL not be involved with the JOCAS. MINEDUC did not accept this.

87. Biweekly meetings were a major time commitment for busy and usually overworked professionals in charge of a national program. It is an indication of the importance of the program for those who originally formed the committee and designed the JOCAS.

88. Transcription from interview by the author with Rosario Solar, June 1999.

89. ChileNet Press Abstracts, 1996.

90. Transcription from interview by the author with Dr. Raquel Child, January 2000.

91. UNFPA has supported replications of the JOCAS/JOCCAS in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Mexico and Mozambique. The Ministry of Education has produced both manuals and videos in Spanish describing the school-based JOCAS, and SERNAM produced manuals for the community-based JOCCAS. <http://biblioteca.MINEDUCuc.cl/documento/>



jocas.pdf. Those interested in replicating these and similar models can consult with Rodrigo Vera of FLACSO, Chile at verarod@hotmail.com.

92. Several respondents (including Silva, Kleincsek, and Arriagada) reported that few priests responded to the invitations of the schools.

93. Field notes from interview with Magdalena Kleincsek of EDUK, 2000.

94. *La Tercera*, 1997. op. cit.

95. Ibid.

96. Abatte and Arriagada, 1998.

97. Ibid., 65.

98. Interview with Rosario del Solar, June 1999.

99. Name applied by Rodrigo Vera and others to JOCAS that are complemented by simultaneous community-based educational activities.

100. Some NGOs and government ministries in certain municipalities participating in the Responsible Sexuality program run JOCCAS-like community-based events. The "Contacto" project at the University of Chile, run by Prof. Irma Palma and Paula Arriagada, is a pilot project that uses multiple means, including "mini-JOCAS," to reach the young in low-income neighborhoods of Santiago; also see: [www.contacto.uchile.cl](http://www.contacto.uchile.cl), accessed in March 2005.

101. Formerly available on the MINEDUC web site. As of June 2005, a search for "JOCAS" on the MINEDUC web site yields no results.

102. Personal communication, Rodrigo Vera.

103. Both Bilbao and Molina are practicing Catholics with strong alliances with the progressive wing of the church. Silva has repeatedly expressed her admiration for the "bravery" of the SERNAM and Education Ministers, Josefina Bilbao and Sergio Molina, at the time of the 1996 controversies because they never backed down from their defense of the JOCAS in the face of media and legislative attacks. That such conduct is perceived as brave is a measure of the political costs entailed by defenders of sexuality education programs.

104. Personal communication from Silva, September 23, 2003. She left the Women's Program shortly thereafter because "I was not motivated to administer such a small program after so much effort...and so many achievements!...So when I was offered the post of Regional Secretary for the Fifth Region, I accepted because I thought I could contribute more to my government there." Unlike Silva, her replacement, Rosario Solar, did not have the status of advisor to the minister, further lowering the profile of the JOCAS within the ministry.

105. Notes from telephone conversation with Mariana Aylwin, October 2003. At the time of the interview, she was no longer Minister of Education.

106. Quotes from notes of 9/22/2003 telephone interview with Maria de la Luz Silva and from an e-mail the following day.

107. Although it seems contradictory that the same commission then established the "Responsible Sexuality" program. Possibly, the motive of the name change was not avoiding the word "sex" but making it clear that the committee would not address sex education programs in the schools.

108. The press release on the findings of the study was available on the MINEDUC web site, but is no longer there as of November 2005. The press release referred to a commission, headed by the ex-Director of SERNAM Josefina

Bilbao, which will study the results to “make recommendations on how to improve sexuality education in the schools.”

109. “Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: Chile,” CRC/C/15/Add.173. April 3, 2002.

110. A description of this framework for mainstreaming sexuality education into the different school courses was on the MINEDUC web site, but as of November 2005, could no longer be found. At each level—primary, first two years of secondary and last two years of secondary—guides for teachers explain the important sexuality education objectives and content for courses in language, mathematics, biology, history and social sciences, English and the arts.

111. Personal communication from Rosario Solar, December 2, 2003, transmitting information from those in charge of the program in the Ministry.

112. “Alcaldes y expertos critican propuesta ‘sexualidad responsable’ del gobierno,” *El Mostrador*, July 20, 2001.

113. Personal communication from Rosario Solar, December 2, 2003.

114. Report accessed on March 29, 2005: <http://www.mineduc.cl/sexualidad/encuentro/index.htm>. Link is no longer active.

115. *A tarde joven* in Coquimbo was described on this Web site accessed in March 2005: <http://www.cijcuarta.cl/index2.html>. The link is no longer active.

116. Description of the program accessed in March 2005: <http://www.teenstar-international.org>.

117. Rodrigo Vera ([verarod@hotmail.com](mailto:verarod@hotmail.com)) and Maria de la Luz Silva ([marilu@terra.cl](mailto:marilu@terra.cl)), two of the original members of the Multisectoral Committee, offer their services as consultants to schools or communities wishing to develop sexuality education programs.

118. My thanks to Tim Frasca, who never hesitates to criticize failures of nerve among government officials, for the exchange that stimulated this train of thought.

119. 1980—64.9, 1990—66.1 and 2000—64.1. Data from personal communication from Margarita Pérez of the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, Chile.