

Module 3: Evidence based approaches to health service provision to adolescents - Adolescent health and development with a particular focus on sexual and reproductive health - Assignment

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Reality on the ground in respect to adolescent friendly services in Ghana

Adolescent friendly services are very limited here. A good number of people don't agree that adolescents have special reproductive health needs at all. The general fallacy is that exposing adolescents to sexuality education will "spoil" them so there is still a lot of stigma associated to these services. For example, many female adolescents will certainly avoid the obstetrics and gynaecology department of a hospital for fear of being labeled as bad girls or abortionist.

Overall, our facilities are not structured to provide the needs of the adolescents; neither are the health providers equipped with skills to provide these services. The society comprehends this issue poorly and compounds it. To summarize, I will say the services are not available, not accessible, not acceptable and not friendly enough.

WHO's approach to improving the quality and expanding the coverage of health services to adolescents

Potential utility

Working to expand the coverage as well as the quality is the key of the strategies in my opinion.

Although the facilities are inexistent in many areas, still the issue of quality and standards needs to be in the mainstream right from inception.

Potential feasibility

This approach is feasible but will require the entire society to participate. The entire communities must be sensitized in order to rally support for this program.

In Africa specifically, building on existing structures could mean packaging reproductive health messages to adolescent during the traditional initiation ceremonies, which are very common in most ethnic groups in rural communities. That will be an easy way to gain the support of the local people.

From inception to large scale: the Geração Biz Programme in Mozambique

This program is comprehensive with nationwide coverage and targeting adolescents in schools and out of schools. With this approach, it is reassuring that the impact will be great enough to change the adolescent reproductive health burden in the country.

Many similar programs have worked successfully in Africa under the umbrella of various NGOs but as soon as the donor support dwindles, there comes a significant retrogression. This program seems to have put in place mechanisms to off-set such mishap. The mainstreaming of the adolescent reproductive services into the core activities of the Ministry of Health and with community participation, greatly boost the chances for success. The monitoring and supervision component is another measure to sustain standards.

The sense of ownership can be seen at each level right from the community through the district to the provincial and subsequently to the central level. Most importantly, the collaboration between the Ministries of Youth and Sports, Education and Health underscores the relevance of multisectoral approach and integration in this program. It is my fervent wish that many countries including Ghana with take lessons from the Geração Biz program in Mozambique.

Assignment documents

1. [WHO Department of Child and Adolescent Health and Development. Improving the quality and expanding the coverage of health services for adolescents. WHO's approach. Paper presented at: Training Course in Sexual and Reproductive Health Research; 2010 Sep 11; Geneva.](#)
2. [WHO Department of Child and Adolescent Health and Development. The evidence base for our approach to improve the quality and expand the coverage of health services for adolescents. Paper presented at: Training Course in Sexual and Reproductive Health Research; 2010 Sep 11; Geneva.](#)
3. [WHO, Pathfinder International. From inception to large scale: the Geração Biz Programme in Mozambique. Geneva: WHO; 2009.](#)