

[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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## **Perception of the reality in terms of adolescent friendly health services in Guatemala**

In recent years, the Guatemalan Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare has focused on the youth population, creating friendly spaces, interactive centers and integral clinics for adolescents. Nevertheless friendly health services for adolescents are lacking in most regions of the country particularly in the rural area.

Young people don't attend health services because they don't trust them; there is still a strong cultural component of young people against sex issues imposed by their families.

Many adolescents have no access to government health services because of geographical barriers and they seek traditional non-qualified advisory.

Another negative aspect is lack of properly trained medical and paramedical personnel that respond to adolescents' needs without a prejudiced attitude and with knowledge of their language and culture (in Guatemala there are different indigenous local languages). The referral and contra-referral system needs to be strengthened.

I believe that more community participation (including young people participation, their families and school teachers) together with local authorities is needed to promote friendly health services.

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

It is important to highlight the WHO's definition of health services: the provision of a clinical service, which often includes the provision of information, advice and counseling aimed at preventing health problems or detecting and treating them. In some places like in my country, health care providers often forget the preventive side and focus on the curative part of patients' problems.

WHO's approach to health services for adolescents should be equitable, accessible, acceptable and appropriate in order to work efficiently and effectively. A standard driven quality of health care services should be provided and maintained in order to identify what needs to be done to achieve the original goals. This approach seems feasible but public health policies should be established first. Appropriate financial budget and alliances with other sectors are also important.

Already existing health care services could include or integrate into its structure a friendly space for young people.

A systematic approach should be followed to scale-up these friendly health services learning lessons from the pilot phases.

## **The Geração Biz Program**

The Geração Biz Program is a multisectoral sexual and reproductive health program implemented by the government of Mozambique that encompassed 3 components: youth-friendly health services, school-based interventions and community-based outreach.

Key comments:

- It is important to invest in capacity-building of good trainers to sustainability of these programs, ensuring that providers and peer educators are competent to perform their tasks.
- Well functioning multisectoral programs increase service use more than programs that concentrate only on improving health services. Referral from different stakeholders (teachers and peer educators in schools or community peer educators) contributed to increases in service use.
- Youth involvement is essential to ensure that services meet their needs. When equipped with the appropriate skills, young people can have important influence on policy but on the community, too. Partnerships with adults that provide mentoring and direction enhances youth participation.

## **Assignment documents**

1. [WHO. Adolescent friendly health services. An agenda for change. Geneva: WHO; 2002.](#)
2. [WHO. Methods and tools to scale up quality health service provision to adolescents. Geneva: WHO; 2010.](#)
3. [WHO. From inception to large scale: The Geração Biz Program in Mozambique. Geneva: WHO; 2009.](#)