

**P2.14. Integrating Youth-Friendly Services within Existing Public Health Services address HIV/AIDS and RH Issues among Young People - Worknesh Kereta, Pathfinder, Ethiopia and Mengistu Asnake, Pathfinder, Ethiopia**  
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**Background/Significance:** Youth face many challenges in Ethiopia, including high rates of early marriage, unwanted pregnancy, STIs, and increasingly, HIV infection. The imbalance in power between males and females curtails women's and girls' sexual autonomy and increases their vulnerability to HIV and other sexual and reproductive health problems. This situation affects all social indicators and the country's productive capacity. The need to offer comprehensive youth-friendly services (YFS) has become more than a health issue; it is equally imperative from humanitarian, human rights, economic, and development perspectives.

The recent MOH Adolescent and Youth Reproductive Health Strategy and the Policy on HIV/AIDS recognizes the increased vulnerability of young people to HIV/AIDS and promotes the idea of offering a multitude of services under one roof with strong referral linkages for other needed services.

**Methodology:** In 2006 and 2007, Pathfinder International collaborated with the Ministry of Health and its implementing partners to provide YFS in four regions of Ethiopia. Pathfinder conducted a rapid assessment of 132 facilities that revealed an absence of YFS within existing health facilities. Therefore, Pathfinder introduced YFS in **20** sites within Oromia, Amhara, Tigray, and SNNPR, including **5** university student clinics, with the goal of inspiring the MOH and others to establish and scale-up YFS to other parts of the country.

To date, Pathfinder has:

- Conducted facility assessments;
- Developed and implemented action plans for quality improvements;
- Renovated clinics to provide a separate, attractive, confidential, and private space for youth;
- Furnished and equipped the renovated spaces to attract youth clients and make them comfortable; and
- Trained all facility staff and sensitized community members.

YFS have been established to provide:

- Counseling on various subjects, including provider-initiated counseling and testing, and referrals for HIV, reproductive health, sexual violence, and abuse;
- Family planning services, including emergency contraception;
- Information on prevention of unwanted pregnancy and STIs/HIV by providing a special emphasis on dual protection;
- STI diagnosis and management;
- Pregnancy testing;
- Antenatal, delivery, postnatal care;
- Postabortion care; and
- Referrals for Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT), Opportunistic Infections (OI). Antiretroviral Therapy (ART), and Prevention of Mother-To-Child-Transmission (PMTCT) and other HIV/AIDS care and support.

**Results:** A consultative meeting was conducted for 160 partners, 120 health care providers were trained, 1000 health facility staffs including the guards were sensitized about YFS program, 1400 community leaders and parents were sensitized, 200 youth friendly service supporting peer educators were trained to support the service, 600 health extension workers (HEW) and community based reproductive health agents (CBRHA) were trained and 250 proctors have received training on adolescent and reproductive health in order to support the peer educators conduct discussion in dormitories of five universities.

Since the launching of the youth friendly service over 17, 000 adolescents were able to access different RH/FP services. A total of 12,175 new family planning clients were served, 2,912 youth were referred for

VCT and ART, 296 were diagnosed and treated for STI and 1,466 were given MCH service. Moreover, close to 110,000 adolescents were educated on family planning, HIV/AIDS/STI, safe motherhood, PAC, HTP & GBV, safe sex and other ASRH.

**Next steps:** The project's focus has now shifted to improving the quality of these services. One critical area that needs to be strengthened is expanding the array of services offered at the YFS sites. Young people not only need access to condoms, STI treatment, and counseling for prevention of HIV/AIDS, but also need access to VCT. Youth who are HIV positive need access to an array of other services such as prevention and treatment of opportunistic infections, ART, community home-based care, and PMTCT+.

YFS can attract and retain more youth and serve as an important entry point for VCT/OI/ART/PMTCT+ and prevention of unwanted pregnancies by providing FP and emergency contraception services.