

USAID Transform: Primary Health Care Activity Strengthening Youth-Friendly Services at Wogeltena Health Center

Wogeltena Health Center (HC) is located in the Amhara region in Ethiopia. The facility lacked skilled health workers and adequate space to provide sexual and reproductive health services for the youth. “Utilization of youth-friendly services (YFS) was low, and unwanted pregnancies were quite high among adolescents and youth in the area,” said Getasew Girmay, Head of Wogeltena HC.

But now, thanks to USAID Transform: Primary Health Care the quality of youth-friendly services at Wogeltena has improved. USAID Transform: Primary Health Care also works with health facilities to scale up and enhance YFS within public health facilities. Health providers are trained and receive mentorship to maintain the confidentiality, respect, and privacy of young people. Supportive supervision and on-the-job mentoring are also provided to build the knowledge, skills, and understanding of health workers to provide sexual and reproductive health services for youth and adolescents. YFS are vital to promoting healthy sexual behavior, preventing unwanted pregnancy, and curbing sexually transmitted infections (including HIV). Removing barriers to accessing these services makes the transition from adolescence to adulthood smooth and safer.

USAID Transform: Primary Health Care trained and mentored eleven health workers to elevate the quality of YFS and provide comprehensive family planning services. The eleven health workers later served as mentors and trainers to other staff at the Wogeltena HC. “After the training, two problems were identified. First, the lack of space for YFS. And second, the relatively higher level of unwanted pregnancy among adolescents and youth,” said, Getasew Girmay.



Getasew Girmay, head of Wogeltena Health Center. Photo: USAID Transform Primary Health Care Activity

To solve these challenges, USAID Transform: Primary Health Care worked with Wogeltena HC to develop an action plan, along with the roles and responsibilities of each staff involved. As part of the action plan, a new YFS building was constructed with areas for waiting, examination, and procedure rooms. To ensure utilization of health services and reach more adolescents, “we raised awareness about the availability and quality of YFS,” said Eskadmas Dessaleg, a health worker at Wogeltena HC. Health workers like Eskadmas also provided counseling to the youth who visited the HC for services other than family planning. Overtime, Wogeltena HC noted positive changes. The number of young people visiting the health center to access family planning services increased from 35 percent in July 2020 to 79 percent in January 2021. Together, USAID Transform: Primary Health Care and the Wogeltena HC are encouraging positive health-seeking behaviors, and ultimately improving the wellbeing of Ethiopian youth.