Reviewer's report

Title: Programa Geracao Biz, Mozambique: How did this adolescent health initiative grow from a pilot to a national programme, and what did it achieve?

Version: 1

Date: 24 November 2014

Reviewer: Rebecka Lundgren

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting and worthwhile article on a topic of great relevance to the field today.

Minor Essential Revisions

While I don't feel that each of my comments is compulsory, I do feel that the authors need to work with the article further to revise it to reach its potential. There are some areas that are confusing or too superficial to be compelling. Please see my suggestions below.

It is somewhat confusing to follow the events described in the article. I think it would be beneficial to add a timeline that provides an overview of the piloting and scale up process, including key events (both external and internal).

The article uses the ExpandNet framework but fails to describe it at the outset – a brief description would be helpful. Also, the article is shaped around the sub-elements of the framework without much discussion of the interaction between systems, or the principles that accompany the model of equity, human rights, quality. If the authors address these issues, the paper would be more nuanced and interesting.

I found the use of the secondary data confusing throughout. For example, on pg. 5 – when was this information known? It is not clear whether this information was used to develop or scale up the intervention. In general, I feel that the article would be tighter if the secondary data (not related to PGB) were eliminated.

In the sub-section “capacity” under User Organization: (p. 7): More information would be helpful. The information included is too vague to be useful. In the following section “Commitment”: It would be useful to learn more about how the advocacy happened. The tension between the resource team and user organization are key elements of scale up and the discussion here is too superficial to be very informative. Were there no barriers? How were they overcome? What did “community sensitization” involve? In the bottom of the commitment paragraph the authors discuss “great demand” for services. Where and from whom did the demand come? Youth? Parents? Others? In general this paragraph, to me, makes light of the challenges that were likely faced. If it were this simple, it seems that more pilots would be expanded.
Making strategic choices in scaling up (p. 8): This section is also a little too general to be informative, for example: More explanation of how the horizontal expansion was staged would be helpful? And if any challenges were faced from districts put off to a later time.

There is a typo “resource”.

A bit more detail on how efficient use of resources was ensured, what community sensitization activities consisted of would be helpful.

Some discussion of the intersectionality of the systems would be helpful. It is written as if each is a separate system, but surely they interact.

Vertical scaling up: What was the relative importance of the different components?

Managing the scaling up strategy:

Deciding on the Managerial and Org Processes of Scale up: This section is important as it is the crux of scale up. More explanation of the new provincial level management structures would be useful. I think a diagram would help illustrate this point. This discussion is complicated, but important. i am interested in more discussion around the need for increased staffing. This is critical for scale- up but sometimes a challenge to achieve. How was this accomplished?

Costs: This section addressed funding not costs. Is there any info available on the costs of the intervention? Where does this fit in the EN framework? Is this a discussion of leveraging funds?

Monitoring and Evaluation:

How were the results from the external evaluations used to support scale-up? I’m not sure of the relevance of this paragraph- did the results support scale up or is it showing the program was effective?

In terms of the second paragraph on monitoring and evaluation, it would be useful to have some discussion of the specific challenges to M&E during scale up. Were changes required from pilot to scale up? This is a critical area with little info.

Impact on behaviors and Outcomes (p. 10): This section seems less relevant and a little forced. The results presented are too fragmented to really provide useful information on PGB’s effectiveness. I would delete much of this section, but just include some evaluation results in the beginning of the article which make the case of why this intervention was being scaled up.

ASRH after PBG scale-up (2008-2013)

Were the changes described in this paragraph statistically significant? This is an example of where the timing if somewhat confusing, a timeline would help to place this evaluation and other information discussed in this section in context.
Discussion: This section would be stronger if it discusses scale up theory and PBG rather than just describing the experience. For example, I am interested in reading about the interaction between the resource team and user organization and what made that relationship work. The first paragraph mentions difficulties in compatibility with local norms and ease of installation- how were those challenges addressed?

In the second paragraph which begins with a mention of the ExpandNet framework- I think this paragraph would be stronger if the article better describes the management structures put into place earlier in the article. This paragraph also mentions that close attention was paid to M&E so that operations could be changed as operations arose during scaling up- this was not well described earlier in the M&E section, although it is an intriguing statement.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.