

3.2. Malaria as a Pathfinder to Decentralization of Health Services

With the implementation of the Health Sector Reform, the health administrator has to face new challenges and adjust to new relationships with populations which are undergoing major adjustments such as demographic transition and aging in the population, both of which give way to epidemiological changes. The reform also entails the modernization, streamlining and reduction of government structures, more efficiency and equity in access to services, the transferring of power to local authorities and to community leaders, the increased involvement of the private sector and the introduction of new actors such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These paths lead to the decentralization of health services of which malaria can play an important role.

The following factors have to be taken into account:

- Epidemiological surveillance and disease control is typically a governmental activity
- Programs must follow national standards and apply simultaneous actions
- Supplies and equipment are obtained locally with great difficulty
- Programs lack community participation
- Disease control actions must be integrated with primary health care activities