

Reviewer's report

Title: Public-private options for expanding access to human resources for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care in the health system of Botswana

Version: 1 **Date:** 5 March 2007

Reviewer: mary oneil

Reviewer's report:

General

Congratulations to the authors, I think the topic of this paper is timely and a good choice for publication. It gives solid background information on the context in Botswana and the options for involvement of the private sector. However, I think it could benefit from a good editor. I do have substantive edits on the flow of the paper which I think will make it more readable and accessible to the reader. as well on the logic between the text and the tables. There are parts of the paper where it is also difficult to understand exactly what role WHO played and I will attempt to point this out.

While what I suggest, below, are substantive editorial edits, it is not a question of my being unable to decide on acceptance. I do. Nonetheless, I hope the authors will reflect on the rather long list of comments below and respond positively.

Page 1

1. shorten the title

2. ABSTRACT: 4th line should read 'treatment' i.e. bottlenecks preventing people from receiving 'treatment' and not care. my understanding is tht this paragraph relates to ART specifically

3. INTRODUCTION: 3rd paragraph: sentence describing the contribution of other donors, GATES, etc. is out of place here. It interrupts the flow from the 2nd paragraph about the role of McKinsey, to the role of WHO (last sentence in paragraph 3) It is not clear what is meant by 'programme' in this sentence. I assume it was the programme recommended by McKinsey. As this is the first time you use KITSO, please spell it out.

Page 2

4. Country background data. Put this in a box somewhere. It doesn't fit here and confuses the reader who is trying to follow the description of the McKinsey study, the WHO work and the result, i.e., an initial emergency response...again in this sentence, page 2, under the country data: ".....as an initial emergency response, it is still not clear that you are talking about ART. Make this clear.

5. Last paragraph in the INTRODUCTION section is problematic. at the end, you say the ART could not begin due to insufficient HR...Didn't McKinsey uncover this obstacle in their report? But more to the point, your last sentence here: "Thus the need to identify other health system resource' is the MAJOR theme of this paper and I find it buried.

The Health Workforce Situation in Botswana.

1. paragraph 1: last sentence refers to table 1 as an overview of the human resource situation in the country. from my reading, it is not this, but rather a table on the healthworkers needed, or relevant to ART Scale up. Please correct this description.

paragraph 2: same problem, Table 2 doesn't relate clearly to the text. Describe it as it is: "posts established and approved for scale-up" I think it would be of interest to the reader to know where these staff come from, especially in light of the philosophy mentioned in the introduction, about not 'raiding' from other countries.

Paragraph 3...you are talking about 16 sites as I understand it, so suggest you make it clear that the core team needed to start ART is in relationship to these 16 sites?

Paragraph 4 & 6: ..."given the impetus, 3x5....I suggest you put this paragraph along with the bullets in the introduction. It is general overview information, also in the last paragraph, you really spell out the objective of the WHO technical assistance...again, I think this gets lost here. pull it out and put it up front in the

introduction

The Range of ART Providers and their Potential

I think the title of this section should read: the 'Challenges' of ART Providers, etc. as this is what you are talking about. Also, AGAIN: the last sentence should go first. You seem to have a habit of putting the key theme of the paragraph at the end (!) instead of at the beginning so people can be steered properly.

Potential Contribution of Simplified Access and Patient Flows to Skilled ART staff

It seemed to me that this described steps taken by WHO earlier on...as part of the response in 2004. Not sure if it fits here.

This paragraph also ends with the sentence that many of these 'steps' were implemented. Can you comment on which ones and why? would be of reader interest.

Challenge and Opportunities for Scaling Up Access to HR

1. again, a bit of confusion. is the treatment goal being followed the one set by 3x5, or the one set by McKinsey?

AND...I think this whole section needs to be moved to the 'Health Workforce Section'

Potential Corporate Sector Contributions

this section too, is out of place...connect it with the earlier section on 'private sector contributions.'

Potential Private Practice Contributions...This too, should be part of the previous sections also on the private sector. It is confusing to find these parts separated when they are all linked.

same goes for the next section on 'Measures Taken....this is also private sector.

I think the paper would be much stronger to lay out the constraints and contributions of the private sector all at once..as well as what they have already contributed.

"successes and challenges" I know the word is a bit tired, but people really want to see the 'results' of this strategy, so suggest you substitute 'results' for the word 'successes' in the title of this section.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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