

## Reviewer's report

**Title:** Optimizing Human Resource Management: Lessons from the Georgian National Immunization Program.

**Version: 2 Date:** 24 July 2006

**Reviewer:** Carl-Ardy Dubois

### Reviewer's report:

#### General

This article reports the results of a research that intended to assess and document the current state of the National Immunization Program in Georgia and to identify human resource management (HRM) practices or constraints that may impede its performance. It is clear that the topic of this paper is of high interest to policy makers in a range of countries. However, although the objective is clearly stated, the evidence provided in this paper does not allow to establish a clear association between failures of the Immunisation program and the current human resource management practices. At best the authors provide with an interesting description of perceptions of the HRM process from the perspectives of key stakeholders. But they completely fail to objectify any relationship between the performance of the immunisation program and HRM practices. In addition to this general comments, I will emphasise some key points:

- Although HRM is the main focus of this paper, the analysis of the HR context in which the immunisation program is implemented is quite sketchy. Beyond the perceptions of the stakeholders, the authors should provide with objective data on the human resources involved in this program: their numbers, their distribution, their levels of training, their working conditions, the mechanisms used to supervise their work and monitor their performance, the prevailing system of incentives. Such information would allow to identify HRM problems that serve as bottlenecks to effective implementation of the Immunisation program
  - Another important weakness of this paper is the complete absence of a theoretical or conceptual framework on which the authors could draw to pursue the research objective. It is not clear how the variables examined in this study have been selected.
  - The selection of the sample raises several questions that are not discussed at all in the paper. 15 districts were selected for the intervention group. Another 15 districts were selected for the control group. Does the intervention group refer to districts that have experimented particular HRM practices as part of the IDRC program? What are these practices? It is also surprising that the possible differences between the intervention and control group are not reported and not discussed. The focus of the discussion rather turns to differences between urban and rural areas.
  - Most details should also be provided about the instruments used particularly for the survey: validity and reliability of the instruments, the theoretical support to the choice of the variables.
- Overall, I do not think that this paper can be published in its current state. Major revisions would be needed to address the issues previously raised

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

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

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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