Reviewer's report

Title: Modelling strategic interventions in high fertility, low resource populations: a cross-sectional study of Idjwi Island, DRC

Version: 1 Date: 8 August 2012

Reviewer: Thomas Pullum

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p. 10. MEASURE DHS, not Measure DHS. MEASURE is actually an acronym.

p. 11. What you are giving in (1) and (2) are probabilities of selection. The weights should be inversely proportional to the probabilities of selection. This is very important. If your software package is treating (1) and (2) as weights, then you must replace them with their reciprocals.

p. 14. (3) is not intended to be a device for estimating the TFR, although it is sometimes incorrectly used that way. The TFR, measured in a survey such as yours, is one of the terms required to estimate the C’s. Your PF (TF in the original Bongaarts framework) is much too high at 21. That’s why you are getting an impossibly (literally) high value of the TFR.

I suggest you go to http://www.measuredhs.com/publications/publication-AS23-Analytical-Studies.cfm and use the Bongaarts framework as given there, rather than the Stover modification.

p. 17. The measurement of unmet need has recently been revised. You do not need to change your calculations, but it could be worth noting http://www.measuredhs.com/publications/publication-AS25-Analytical-Studies.cfm.

I have to point out that your recommendations do not emerge from your findings. Your survey provides a helpful description of the setting but the recommendations should be buttressed by additional evidence that the kinds of services you propose have been effective in bringing about change in other comparable settings. Such evidence may not be so easy to find, because economic development and education are typically important antecedents for increases in contraceptive prevalence.

I would consider it essential for you to identify at least one comparable setting, as of perhaps 20 years ago, in which the introduction of the kinds of services you describe have clearly led to increases in contraceptive prevalence, in the absence of parallel economic development. The setting should be in sub-Saharan Africa, NOT in South Asia, for example.

I believe your proposed interventions are desirable but in a journal article you should be required to provide more of a rationale for your recommendations. That’s putting aside the fact that such specific policy recommendations are not
typically included in a journal article.