Reviewer's report

Title: Enabling pathways to health equity: a qualitative study of social capital in practice

Version: 2 Date: 13 March 2013

Reviewer: Bertha Nhlema-Simwaka

Reviewer's report:

General Comments
The paper addresses an important emerging concept in social sciences and health. Although sometimes social capital is alluded to as a significant aspect in health and wellbeing, there is little evidence on the linkages between social capital and health outcomes. The authors have comprehensively explained the problem and justified the study. The authors have tried to consolidate evidence towards building a framework for understanding how social capital can be applied in health service delivery. The approach/methodology used is appropriate; however there is lack of detail on how case studies were selected. The authors also have not discussed their findings within the context of existing evidence or literature.

Compulsory Revisions
1. The title used by the authors gives an impression that the scope of paper is health equity and social capital; but the content and purpose reveals that the authors intended to build a framework/theory in practice based on case study analysis. The authors should consider changing the title to suit the context.

2. Although the case study is an appropriate approach; it is not clear how these case studies were selected. I would like to recommend that the authors should provide a clear inclusion and exclusion criteria for the case studies selected.

Minor Revisions
1. The authors should also provide information on whether implementers of the case studies selected had in mind the notion of social capital at the onset on their projects. The authors should also declare whether these implementers never had this in mind and that the projects were regarded as appropriate for this study based on the authors’ judgement.

2. As indicated above the findings have very little about equity. Possible additional informations will help

3. The authors should also strengthen their discussions of findings by referring to other studies. There are several studies in Africa which demonstrates role of social capital in community health based programmes, pathways to care seeking.

4. The authors should also indicate the knowledge gaps for future research.

The writing is generally acceptable. I would like to recommend publication with
minor revision.

**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.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

NONE