Reviewer's report

Title: Developing training and leadership capacity in health workforce development: a collaborative initiative of universities from four sub Saharan countries

Version: 1 Date: 7 November 2013

Reviewer: Agya Mahat

Reviewer's report:

This is a very relevant paper on south-to-south academic collaboration for health workforce development, a particularly important and pressing issue in the field of global health that is yet to receive due attention and investment in developing countries. A lack of adequate faculty to teach about unconventional specialties, such as the health workforce, and the urgent need of national HRH experts is a challenge faced by many countries. The lessons learnt from the implementation of this academic partnership will be of significance to other countries that are trying to find ways to solve a similar problem.

Discretionary revisions: Below are some thoughts on improving this paper.

1. Some exemplary quotes from the participants will make the arguments stronger and more explicit.

2. Questions:
   a. What is offered in the voluntary face-to-face sessions?
   b. A little more information on the practical issues encountered during the introduction and implementation of the distance learning program would give readers a better idea about the program delivery and challenges. For example, what was the prior IT capacity of partner institutions and e-knowledge of students, and what kind of support and training was required for the program delivery?
   c. The banning of distance learning due to quality concern issues by governments is an issue in some other countries as well. It would be useful for readers to know how the negotiation was reached in Ethiopia.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests