Reviewer's report

Title: Source country perceptions, experiences and recommendations regarding health workforce migration: A case study from the Philippines

Version: 1
Date: 5 June 2014
Reviewer: Evgeniya Plotnikova

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The authors address a very topical area of research on the cross-border mobility of nurses. In particular, the paper focuses on the outmigration of nurses from the Philippines - one of the major labour supplying countries in the world. Taking into consideration that it is a very broad topic, the formulation of the title and the research questions addressed in this paper could be sharpened to reflect the particular aspect which this paper aims to explore. For instance, whether the global financial crisis has caused any changes in perceptions and experiences of nurse migration in the Philippines?

2. The findings presented in this paper are based on the analysis of the focus groups conducted with the representatives from the 'leading organisations in the Philippines'. Table 1 is an informative supplement which reveals the institutional affiliation and the professional expertise of the focus group participants, but the narrative of this paper does not clearly reveal which organisations were selected for this study and how. It would be helpful to include this information in the 'Abstract' and 'Method' sections. For instance, the paper could state more explicitly that it focuses on the perspective of the institutions involved in the education and employment of Filipino nurses, and that the analysis does not include the perceptions of the nurses themselves or the government officials working in labour, education or migration departments.

3. As one of the limitations of this research, the authors identify the time constraint 'which restricted each participant from discussing each question in more detail'. In this context, the reviewer questions whether the conducted focus groups are an appropriate method and whether a choice in favour of individual expert interviews would be a better option considering the research purpose. Also, the authors could have included a brief explanation of their preference for the focus groups and the added value of employing this method as opposed to expert interviews.

4. It is not clear, from the 'Method' section, whether the authors employed the method of documentary analysis, for instance, analysis of documents produced by organisations (included in this study), other organisations (not sampled for this research), government documents or media reports. It would be valuable if the authors could specify whether any of the aforementioned types of documents
were included in the analysis and how the content of these documents corroborate with the results of the focus group discussions.

5. Authors on a few occasions refer to the 'selection bias', however, the meaning of this term is not clear. Could you please clarify this term?

Discretionary Revisions

6. The data is presented in two subsections which describe the perceptions and the recommendations of the participants, distinguished by their affiliation to either health or educational organisations. Perhaps an additional dimension of how responses from the private and public organisations are different or similar could be explored in the 'Discussion' in greater detail.

7. The conclusion offers a number of recommendations based on the findings from the focus groups. The paper will benefit from a more developed account of the feasibility and the expected outcomes of the proposed measures.

Minor issues not for publication

8. Section 'The Philippines political economy', paragraph 2, first line: an abbreviation after the term 'Global Financial Crisis' should be introduced;
9. Results, paragraph 1, end of the third line: remove the repeating full stop;
10. Discussion, paragraph 1, second sentence: insert a full stop;
11. Discussion, paragraph 1, third sentence: remove the repeating full stop;
12. Discussion, paragraph 5, line 8, the sentence about Ireland: the purpose of this sentence and the connection with the previous and the following text are not very clear, please, explain;
13. Discussion, paragraph 7, line 5: please include a brief note (perhaps, a footnote), explaining what the Saskatchewan model is;
14. Conclusion, paragraph 7: delete one of the repeating sentences 'It is to be hoped that ...';
15. Supply please the interview citations with the relevant indication of the source, for instance, the institutional affiliation of the interviewee.

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: I declare that I have no competing interests.