Reviewer's report

**Title:** Joint Special Issue E.21: Training front-line health workers for tuberculosis control in developing countries: lessons from Nigeria and Kyrgyzstan

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 24 April 2008

**Reviewer:** Prof. Vaira Leimane

**Reviewer's report:**

1. Major compulsory Revisions
   Recommendations
   I. Introduction
      1. Please make analysis and describe better differences in two programs:
         - Vertical NTP (Kyrgyzstan)? And horizontal NTP (Nigeria)? What are the main differences in organizational structure and staff (numbers/ distribution etc.)
         - statistical analysis of all available data for both programs
   II. Quantity
      1. Please motivate yours (authors') estimation and recommendations for density of HCW: references and calculations received form other successful projects in the regions in vertical and horizontal NTP programs is advisable (your eg. (see paragraph- distribution) adequate work force in Kyrgyzstan 1:17/ authors'proposal 1:24)
   III. Quality
      ________________
   IV. Distribution
      1. Please provide underline footnote with definition and reference:
         - “prison/ rural posting package;”
         - „productivity mix”;
         - “undergraduate and post- basic training” in different regions (see introduction);
         - “front- line staff”(TB/ or PHC) (see quantity)
   V. Conclusions
      1. Please explain and comment (no analysis in the “body”)with references:
         - Why do authors choose Malawi NTP (vertical + horizontal NTP) and not one of the programs in Central Asia? May be it is not possible in Asia due to different density and habits of people or it is related with other issues- strong/ weak program, structure of program or culture/ religion in the setting;
         - why do authors think that most developing countries inadequately fund post basic training;
- NGOs have strong influence on the TB training;

Why do authors conclude that distance learning is option in developing countries: it means advanced skills in technologies, speed and availability of INTERNET? Is Kyrgyzstan and Nigeria or other developing countries the case?

PS. If data are not analyzed in the “body”, then conclusions can’t be make.

2. Minor essential Revisions- Numbers, labels, spelling mistakes

Recommendations

I. Introduction

Please explain why authors:

- make comparison of Nigeria data (worldwide) and Kyrgyzstan data (Central Asia) - no correlation;

- think that there is difference in training programs in Sub-Saharan and EE and CA training programs for TB if they are based on WHO strategy and recommendations;

- give data only for Nigeria under Leprosy: TB/ general consultations and no any data available for Kyrgyzstan tobacco/ HIV TB/ General consultations;

- think that there is a case to wait for “international consensus on emphasis” on training doctors, nurses/ laboratory staff: epidemiical situation/ geography/ population density/ structures of the programs/ tehnical possibilities/ job descriptions/ cultural issues/ religion etc can vary form country to country even within one region

II. Quantity

Please explain why

- quantity is said numbers for whole Africa and different countries in Africa and not for whole Central Asia and countries in CA but only in KYR;

- Number estimations are not the same for Nigeria and Kyrgyzstan.

III. Quality

Please revise and explain such questions as:

- why do you mean under revise programs in consultation with WHO and IUATLD regularly; how- and also what topics are missed, what training materials;

- what post graduate system has Nigeria (data given only for Kyrgyzstan);

- what are selection criteria for the participants- eg. decision makers (experts) who can implement new strategies and provides technical training on sites

- do Nigeria HCW has possibility to be trained in regional centers (again selection criteria for participants and programs);

- accreditation system in the countries- to get credit points for local professional organizations participating in the other training centers not local.
IV. Distribution
Please revise and describe:
- Kyrgyzstan provide 30% incentive for front line staff, no any data on Nigeria (not applicable?/ have authors search);
- rural/ prison package for HCW as incentive- is there experience in central Asia or Africa (eg. Baku, Azerbaijan prison system);
- staff motivation; what steps National program in Kyrgyzstan and Nigeria have integrated in the NTP (no description as far); are there any successful projects in the regions mentioned above;
- job description of frontline worker- lack of what knowledge, what skills?

V. Conclusions
Please revise and describe:
- planning for training need required human resource information system (double reference – source #3) no explanation and definitions what does it mean;
- evaluation- who are skilled and how they can do -NTP managers, facilitators, self evaluation of participants or only program rates evaluation.

3. Discretionary revisions- recommendations to improve, but can choose to ignore

Recommendations
I. Introduction
Please revise and describe
- who is the target audience of this commentary- program managers/ strategy developers/ governments/ donor organizations, how they can access this publication;
- Nigeria continues to" lag behind" training , no data available on how “lag behind” Kyrgyzstan;
- Clarification front- line staff- TB or PHC?

II. Quantity


III. Quality


IV. Distribution


V. Conclusions
Mind:
Target audience is defined only in conclusions – commentary is for policy makers and NGOs, are they reading this journal, can authors and publishers can reach
them and how

General question:
What are the lessons form Nigeria and Kyrgyzstan- where is the gap in HCW knowledge and skills?

Good luck in further work!!!!

Peer review is done by
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State Agency for Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases, Latvia, Education and Science Department.

Does it address and important or timely issue- YES.
Is it well reasoned- PARTLY.
Is it relativity balanced- NO.
Or does it make plain where the author’s opinions might not represent the field as a whole – YES.
Is the standard of writing acceptable- YES.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Declaration of competing interests:**

Managing editor uploaded this report on behalf of author and is awaiting confirmation that the joint reviewers of thie article have no competing interests.