Reviewer's report

Title: Strategies to strengthen Human Resources for Health from the perspective of development cooperation: A cross-country comparison

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Reviewer: pascal zurn

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The article addresses an important issue for which information is often lacking. In that sense, it is very encouraging to see this article. Indeed, good reviews of initiatives of international partners to strengthen HRH are very valuable. Given the complexity of international partner programmes, this is certainly not an easy task to perform.

This paper provides very interesting information, however, a certain number of issues more attention in order to better value the results of this study.

It would be important to specify whether the article wants to have an exhaustive review of initiatives of international partners to strengthen HRH, with a particular focus on the role of the German cooperation, or to indicate that the article will focus on specific initiatives.

One question is also why the German Development Cooperation has been chosen, is it because it is a key player in HRH international partner programmes?, in particular in those five countries (Cameroon, Indonesia, Malawi, Rwanda and Tanzania). Do we have information on what represents the German Development Cooperation in the total cooperation (and if possible in HRH support) in these countries?

In that sense, it would be good (if possible) to provide more quantitative information. For instance, which percentage of the German Development Cooperation is devoted to Health Systems Strengthening and which one to HRH?

It would be also be good to have a Figure of the different elements of the German Development Cooperation involved in HRH, and indicate their respective importance in terms of budget devoted to HRH support (GTZ, KfW, DED, InWEnt, etc.)

In the part Results and Discussion, it would be good to review the structure in order to facilitate comparisons.

1) It would be good to have for each sub-heading, a review country by country.

2) It would also bring more clarity if there is a similar approach within each of the sub-heading. For instance, a general overview of the key international initiatives,
and then a review of the involvement of the German Cooperation or focusing first on the involvement of the German Cooperation, and then placing it in a more general context. Now both approaches tend to be mixed and this creates some confusion for the reader.

It would also be interesting to have some information on the impact of the programmes supported by international initiatives.

**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'