Reviewer's report

Title: Rebuilding Human Resources for Health: A Case Study From Liberia

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Reviewer: Joyce Smith

Reviewer's report:

This is an extremely useful and comprehensive article as there is a dearth of literature on post-conflict HR redevelopment. The amount of information and data is extensive and it documents well the happening and events. However there are a number of important areas which are covered in a fragmented manner through the document. If these areas were covered in a more consolidated manner it would render the article even more useful.

1. It does not clearly deal with the development of a HR System. It is mentioned that a HR director and HR officers were appointed but does not clearly identify what their role and functions are and their role in relation to all the implemented activities and strategies. Without this one gets the impression that everything is generated from the planning section of the MOHSW and the HR director and HR Officers are just token appointees who merely deal with personnel issues. I am sure (hope) that this is not the case but that is the impression given.

2. As the redevelopment of the government health workforce is part of redevelopment of the civil service there was no indication of what relations were with the civil service commission/authority particularly in relation to creation of posts, categories, job descriptions and salary structures.

3. The whole issue of health worker production is covered but again in a splintered way, this would better be consolidated as the emergency approach raises the issue of quality, what has been done to improve quality? The article documents the issues of the schools but in a fragmented manner. In post-conflict environment the choice is large scale production of low quality or smaller scale production of better quality. Given the large numbers of nurses that have been produced and what is described re the training institutions the quality must be extremely varied. How can this variation in quality be addressed.

4. It is also mentioned that continuing education has been developed based on the BPHS, however there is no indication of how this is managed to avoid the usual ad hoc unregulated implementation of in service training where by it is regarded by health workers purely as a source of income rather than a source of professional development.

Other comments:
- Whilst the introduction is very interesting and informative, it could be abbreviated
- I think that the targets of reassigned health workers to rural areas is somewhat
optimistic, even with incentives it is extremely difficult to get health workers to move!

- The countries selected for examples of strategies are not necessarily the best examples as they are far removed from the current stage of post-conflict reconstruction as Liberia, if the authors search related to post-conflict HR redevelopment outside Africa, there are good examples from countries in Asia such as Cambodia timor Leste and Afghanistan which have more recently worked through or are working through the same post-conflict issues as Liberia

Overall this is a very useful and interesting article and the authors are to be congratulated

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 I have no competing interests