Reviewer’s report

Title: Devolution and human resources in primary healthcare in rural Mali; exploring the potential.

Version: 1 Date: 7 February 2011

Reviewer: Sylvia Bergh

Reviewer’s report:

This is a very well written and coherently argued article. I only have some discretionary revisions to suggest:

Abstract: p.1 3rd paragraph: insert 'main' in front of 'issue'
Introduction: p. 2 2md paragraph: what are 'vertical programmes'?
p. 2 4th paragraph: insert 'does' in front of 'not'
Discussion: p. 2 6th paragraph: correct typo in 'heath'
Discussion/responsiveness: p. 3 2nd paragraph: what does 'it' refer to?
Capacities/social capital: p. 5 2nd paragraph: what is the Bamako Initiative?
Capacities/capacity development: p. 5 3rd paragraph: give more details about the training programme: when was it conducted, by whom? is it the same as mentioned earlier by SNV and KIT? (in this case, perhaps it's easiest just to insert 'mentioned above')
Capacities/financial incentives: p. 5 4th paragraph: when were these various financial incentive schemes introduced?
Politics and patronage: p.6 2nd paragraph: 'limited decision space and discretion' - this sounds contradictory, please revise for clarity

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.