Reviewer’s report

Title: Developing programme theory for purveyor programmes

Version: 3 Date: 27 October 2012

Reviewer: Bianca Albers

Reviewer’s report:

Since this is review no. 2 I will solely focus on additional remarks I find important to make after having seen hat the authors have followed up on most of the issues I listed in review 1. That is the reason for NOT giving this review the same structure as review no. 1

My main discussion point refers to the definitions the authors use for “purveyor” and “intermediary organization” respectively. As can be seen in the 2nd passage of the Background chapter, purveyors are described as individuals / organizations that operate as outside experts, whereas intermediaries are working with program improvement within their own organization. I fully understand this interpretation on the basis of the applied reference to the literature (Fixsens & colleagues article on core component), but I doubt that this delineation would resonate in a field where purveyors and intermediary organizations have a prominent position: Mental health / child and family services. I therefore would strongly recommend to include Robert Franks, The Role of the Intermediary Organization in Promoting and Disseminating Best Practices for Children and Youth (2010) in the work with the article (attached to my review) and follow up on some of the references in his article. As you can see there, the term "purveyor" is defined more narrowly as being about purveying typically just one specific program (e.g. "Nurse Family Partnership), whereas the intermediary organization works with a range of programs and very likely operates as an outside expert. To include a discussion or additional information would give the article a higher degree of credibility in this part of the world of human services.

I would also be careful with mentioning concrete purveyors in the article (three are mentioned), since there are many more in the field of social services / mental health / child and family services - maybe just mention them in a footnote as examples and point to the fact that these are just examples. Robert Franks own organization is an intermediary organization as well, and there could be listed many additional organizations.

A few minor details: The Practice Group for purveyors and intermediary organization has its own website (http://gicpurveyors.com) that should be used in the article as an additional information in reference no. 9

Typo page 6: "organisations" :-)

I'd be happy to discuss the topic further if needed - feel free to contact me if
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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.