Reviewer’s report

Title: Community resistance to a peer education programme in Zimbabwe

Version: 2  Date: 9 August 2014

Reviewer: Kaspar Wyss

Reviewer’s report:

The article analyses community perceptions of a peer education programme in Zimbabwe, which was not able to reduce HIV incidence at population level. The manuscript is well written and of general interest. At the content side we do only have few comments, but consider the manuscript as too long (see below).

Major compulsory revisions

• Given the depth of the results presented and the main conclusions, the manuscript is very lengthy (and too long). We identify a substantial potential for shortening the manuscript for example in the sections “the mainland STI/HIV intervention”, “Disappointing findings of the Mainland STI/HIV intervention” as well as the result section. The two introductory sections which amount to 2 pages can be cut down to 1 or 2 paragraphs. In the result section there is potential to drop a number of citations so that the section is reduced by at least 1/3 of the length.

• Along the previous comment: in the introduction section there is a chapter on “rethinking evaluation research”. This paragraph is of interest. But in case ideas expressed in this paragraph are not revisited in the conclusion chapter and related to the findings of the research, this section can substantially be cut as not immediately relevant for the manuscript.

Minor essential revisions:

• In case for data analysis a software was used please add this in the methods section

• Given the central role of peer educators within the context under review, please add a short paragraph describing their general characteristics (e.g. still active CSWs? Older aged women, etc.)

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