Reviewer’s report

Title: Learning sites for health system governance in Kenya and South Africa: reflecting on our experience

Version: 0 Date: 11 Mar 2020

Reviewer: Nuhad Dumit

Reviewer's report:

I would like to thank the authors for the informative manuscript and the interesting work that they did. The following are my comments:

In pages 5-6, further description of your work is needed as it is not clear what the "programme of work" is composed of.

You have too many long sentences 4 lines and more through the manuscript that makes it hard to follow;

Some sentences have brackets within brackets also makes it hard to follow.

The manuscript could be organized/structured differently to ease the flow and make it read easier with short sentences such as:

Under "Learning site activities: where did we work, what did we do and how did we do it?" you could add subheadings like "where did we work", another subheading "what did we do", and a 3rd subheading "how did we do it". Under each subheading you include related content.

The same would go for the heading "What are the achievements and challenges of the learning site approach?"

Specific comments:

Page 7, line 121, write PHC in its extended form then abbreviate: Primary healthcare centers (PHC)
Page 7, line 125, you write "these features", what features? What are you referring to? If you mean the health expenditure per head and the PHC performance, which later you did not consider for selection sites, then why are they mentioned?

Page 8, lines 154-159, very long sentence that needs editing for spelling such as focused which is more widely/internationally acceptable compared to "focussed" and unclear content such as "for example, see [31"; what is 31?

Page 8 & 9, all paragraphs of the 6 features are long convoluted sentences that makes it hard to follow and includes instructions such as "see 31; see 34; see 39; see 44, 29 and on"

Page 10, lines 198-200, the following sentence is not clear: However, they all, first, sought to strengthen the researcher-manager relationships underpinning learning site activities, including by allowing better understanding of each other's organisational worlds."

Page 16, line 343, the sentence needs revision:"It has been not always been possible to work consistently and effectively up the system, ...

Page 18, line 397, the sentence "Through the learning sites we have been able better to understand the micro-practices" needs revision

Good luck

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