Reviewer's report

Title: Action research and health system strengthening: the case of the health sector support program in Mauritania, West Africa

Version: 0 Date: 18 Aug 2019

Reviewer: Augustina Koduah

Reviewer's report:

This paper presents informative research on health system strengthening. The manuscript can be improved for publication based on these few reasons provided below:

General comments

In this action research what specific change was initiated? Participatory approach was used in the AI-PASS program to induce change. What change was induced?

Methods

Check referencing format - for General Population and Housing Census and National Health Account.

Typo - 'ad' line 149

How was data from the document review and observations analysed before triangulating with interview data? Kindly include your analysis in the write up.

Consider including criteria for selecting the 'learning districts'

Results

Kindly highlight outcomes of the action research. For example, what innovative practices did the action research steering committee facilitated to inform policy. What theory of change was established for both districts?

Table 3 summarizes 'essential component to be evaluated'. Consider moving this to the methods session and present findings of the evaluation under the results session.
What are the findings from the additional evaluation of current pharmacy management and local healthcare financing arrangements? Consider adding this to your findings.

Consider presenting summary of the local health system analysis in the results session. Are there any difference between the learning districts?

Consider presenting findings in the result session along your specific objectives such as:

1. Description and evaluation of capacity-building activities in the learning districts
2. Lessons from the process evaluation

Discussion

'This study showed that the systematic involvement of various actors had a prominent influence on local health systems function, and therefore, it accelerated change' What change was accelerated? Change from what?

Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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