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## Authors' Reply to Letter to Editor: Promoting Sustainability Activities in Clinical Radiography Practice and Education in Resource-Limited Countries: A Discussion Paper

Dear Editor,

Thank you for allowing us to respond to the letter<sup>1</sup> sent to you regarding our article.<sup>2</sup> First, we thank the writer(s) for reading our paper and raising some questions and suggestions. They suggest the paper could explore intermediate technologies, refurbishing existing equipment, or using second-hand devices as interim solutions until new technologies can be adopted. We agree this is worth exploring but recommend ensuring that second-hand or refurbished equipment is fit for purpose and environmentally friendly. Not all such equipment is sustainable, as some may be faulty, outdated, or at the end of their life. Even refurbished equipment can be inconsistent in quality and reliability, so it must meet international standards before importation. The author(s) also requested case studies of countries that have successfully implemented our proposed strategies. Although this was not the primary purpose of our discussion paper, we did provide some examples on page 59.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, we agree that more case studies would be beneficial and will consider providing another paper with specific examples to support our recommendations.

Additionally, the writer(s) indicated that while the role of telemedicine and teleradiology in reducing carbon footprints is well-discussed, potential barriers such as internet accessibility and digital literacy in these regions could be highlighted along with potential solutions to provide a more balanced view.<sup>1</sup> We agree and believe that the issue of internet connectivity should be addressed by governments, supported by funding agencies and internet providers, who should be able to expand existing infrastructure and fund network upgrades. Notably, Zimbabwe has adopted Starlink satellite technology for rural areas, which are most affected in terms of connectivity.<sup>3</sup> This solution appears to work effectively and costs almost half as much as traditional mobile operators.<sup>3</sup>

We also acknowledge that digital literacy is a longstanding issue in the region, but not for health professionals, as digital education is part of their training. With some application training, they will be ready to use telemedicine and teleradiology. Patients, however, will need support. Simple, step-by-step tutorial videos in multiple languages and written guides with screenshots for basics like logging in and scheduling appointments can help, while ensuring accessibility for patients with disabilities with screen readers for the visually impaired and subtitles for the hearing impaired is crucial.

They also sought suggestions on funding and the role of international bodies.<sup>1</sup> We know that organisations like the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Global Fund, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the European Union (EU), among others, offer grants and support for sustainable healthcare projects. They could provide low-income governments with more funding, particularly for acquiring and implementing digital radiography technologies. These governments should intensify efforts in applying for grants to these and other bodies. International bodies and researchers in developed countries could collaborate with counterparts in low-income countries to apply for grants, conduct research, and develop cost-effective sustainability methods. These suggestions aim to provoke further discussions on securing funding to promote sustainable practices in radiology and radiotherapy in low-income countries. Thank you once again.

## References

1. Writer (2024). Letter to Editor: Promoting Sustainability Activities in Clinical Radiography Practice and Education in Resource-Limited Countries: A Discussion Paper. *Radiography*
2. Ohene-Botwe, B., Amedu, C., Antwi, W. K., Abdul-Razak, W., Kyei, K. A., Arkoh, S., Mudadi, L. S., Mushosho, E. Y., Bwanga, O., Chinene, B., Nyawani, P., Mutandiro, L. C., & Piersson, A. D. (2024). Promoting sustainability activities in clinical radiography practice and education in resource-limited countries: A discussion paper. *Radiography* (London, England: 1995), 30 Suppl 1, 56–61. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.radi.2024.06.007>
3. Pindula News. (2024). Zimbabwe Internet Speed Faster Than Developed World <https://www.pindula.co.zw/2024/07/04/zimbabwe-internet-speed-faster-than-developed-world/>. Accessed: 07/08/24