



Photo Credit: Justina Li, IRC

PROTECTION COST EFFECTIVENESS BRIEF – Becoming One

Uganda | 2022

Executive Summary

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) partnered with World Vision (WV) to provide the Becoming One (BO) program, a domestic violence focused protection project, to 867 couples in Uganda in 2018-2019. The 12-week faith-based counselling program aimed to reduce violence among couples. An impact study found the project slightly reduced experiences of violence, controlling behaviors, and slightly improved behaviors around consent and communication. This brief explores the cost-effectiveness of the program, given these impacts.

The cost per couple for Becoming One was \$183 (2019 USD), including support costs.

Becoming One would have very large cost-effectiveness gains (dropping to as low as \$30 per couple) with an increase in scale through additional rounds of implementation utilizing the same faith leaders each round.

Program Description

Intimate partner violence (IPV) affects an estimated 44 percent of married women in rural Uganda.^{1,2} Efforts to reduce rates of IPV often seek to effect change through interventions led by external actors.³ However, there are concerns external actors may lack legitimacy with local communities, resulting in minimized impact. Local authority figures offer a promising avenue to reduce IPV, but there is little research to-date on the capacity to reduce violence through local authority engagement.

Becoming One Activities

- A communication, finance and sex focused curriculum developed
- Volunteer faith leaders trained to provide counseling in line with the curriculum
- 12 weekly counseling sessions for each couple
- Printed booklets of curriculum materials for both the faith leaders and the couples

The Becoming One program provided 12-weekly sessions of couples counselling to 867 Ugandan couples who had been together for at least one year. The counselling curriculum focused on communication, financial transparency, and female sexual agency to decrease the potential for violence between couples. An existing network of volunteer faith-leaders were trained via e-learning to administer the sessions; each faith leader provided counseling to six couples. The program was implemented through World Vision's existing faith networks in Uganda.

Project Costs

Becoming One cost \$183 per couple provided counseling.

Overall, \$158,237 was spent by IRC and WV on the Becoming One pilot inception and implementation phases. Inception, which included hiring, procurement, and program set-up took place from July to October 2018.

| | Unit Count | Cost per Unit (Support + Program Cost) | Cost per Unit (Program Cost Only) |
|----------------------|------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Per Faith Leader | 143 | \$ 1,107 | \$ 951 |
| Per Couple | 867 | \$ 183 | \$ 157 |
| Per Visit Per couple | 12 | \$ 15 | \$ 13 |

Implementation of the 12-week program was November 2018 to March 2019. The average cost to implement Becoming One was \$183 per couple (Table 1), including support and program costs.

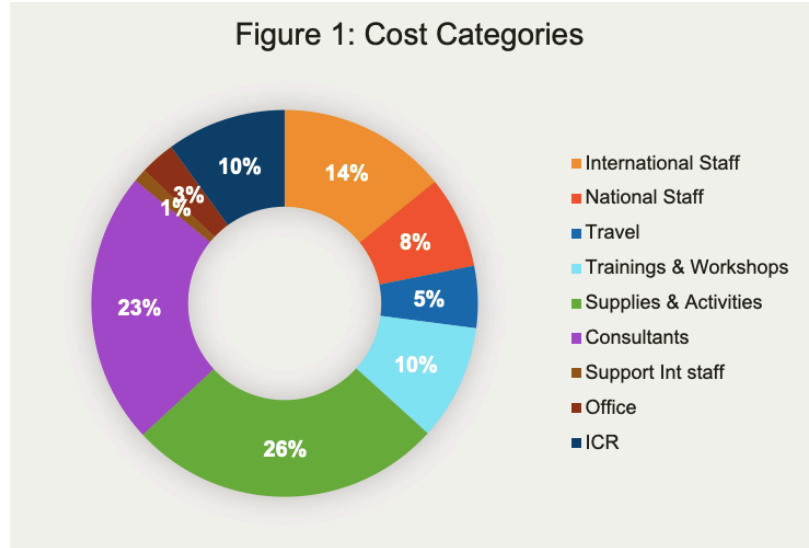
The cost of Becoming One was largely driven by supplies & activities, and consultants.

Becoming One was primarily implemented through volunteer faith leaders using a digital curriculum with supporting printed materials. Becoming One "supplies and activities" was the highest cost of the program (\$206 per faith leader, including a cell phone, SD card, curriculum guide or "kit", and a program t-shirt). In addition, faith leaders attended trainings and workshops (\$46 per faith leader), and couples received supplies (a curriculum book, and IPV bracelets - \$14 per couple).

The second largest cost category was consultants, including the single largest spend overall: a full-time design consultant who created the materials distributed to faith leaders and couples and oversaw the early phases of implementation.

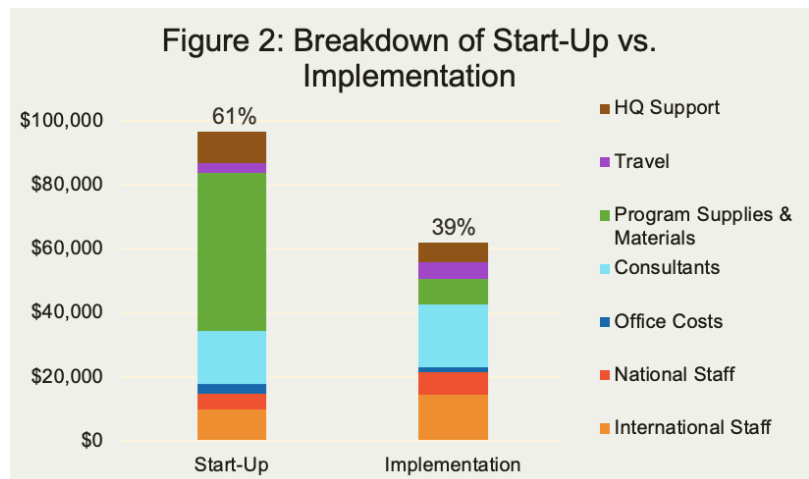
The next three highest costs (all included in International Staff) included the Design Lead; World Vision’s in-country Project Coordinator who oversaw implementation and management of faith leaders; and the IRC Project Coordinator.

Of the \$158,237 spent on Becoming One inception and implementation, 14 percent of total spending were support costs such as HQ staff time and necessary office costs.



Substantial resources were dedicated to the project start-up period in comparison to implementation.

Becoming One’s largest costs, program supplies and design consultants, were mostly incurred prior to implementation. As a result, the start-up period absorbed an unusually large proportion of costs compared to implementation (61 percent and 39 percent, respectively). The majority of the costs for Becoming One provided training and resources to the implementing actors, rather than a cost-heavy direct implementation. Without these one-time development costs, the cost per couple decreases by 31% to \$128 per couple at the same scale.



Significant resources were provided in-kind by community members, driving down the cost.

Because faith leaders were already part of the existing World Vision network, there were minimal recruiting costs. Faith leaders also volunteered their time to implement Becoming One – no compensation was provided for trainings or counseling sessions. Additionally, church space was provided free-of-charge for the 12-week counselling sessions, no travel costs were provided for the couples or faith leaders, and the couples’ time was not compensated.

Results of the Impact Study⁴

The impact of the Becoming One program was measured in a randomized evaluation. The following key findings were identified one year after the program, listed by the outcome.

- **Reduction of violence** – A moderate reduction of violence by a man against his partner was measured one year after the program (a reduction from 42% who experienced violence in the control group to 37% in the Becoming One group, statistically significant).
- **Control sharing**– A small increase in women’s control and decision-making (3.1% change, statistically significant) was found. This improvement was driven by increased involvement and control over their partner’s finances.
- **Communication and conflict resolution** – Small improvements in partners’ communication and ability to resolve conflicts (2.2% change, statistically significant) were found.

Cost Effectiveness Findings

The positive impact estimates show that Becoming One was effective at changing behaviors around consent, control, and communication. At a cost of \$183 per couple, BO has the potential to be cost-effective with increased scale and additional rounds of implementation.

Several factors, explained in detail below, affected the cost of the pilot, and could be expected to affect future costs of the program. These should be taken into consideration before drawing a final conclusion on the cost effectiveness of Becoming One.

The set-up costs of Becoming One heavily contributed to the cost per couple. If these costs are shared over more rounds of the intervention, cost per couple will decrease dramatically.

This cost effectiveness analysis focused on the costs for the pilot of a program that is intended to have multiple rounds of intake and counselling of new couples. As the start-up costs, including curriculum development, and the training and equipping of faith leaders have already occurred, and assuming the same faith leaders are used in subsequent rounds of implementation, the ongoing cost of implementation as new couples are added to the program will be much lower.

The cost-effectiveness of Becoming One is heavily dependent on the volunteer model.

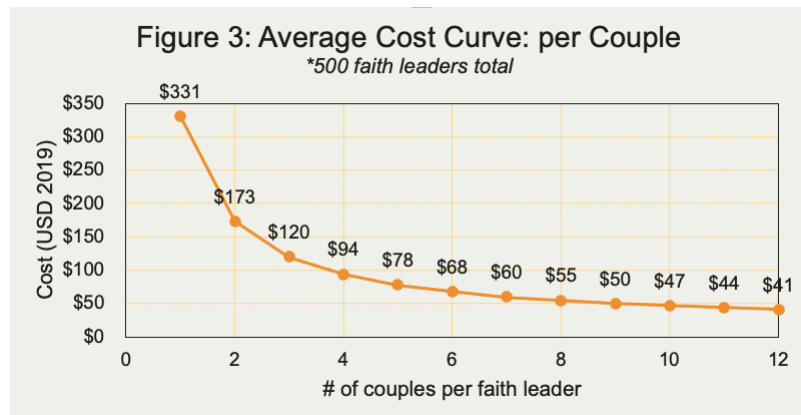
The cost of Becoming One would increase by magnitudes if volunteer resources (faith leaders, counseling locations, participant time) were not leveraged. This suggests that the cost-effectiveness of the program is contingent on the availability of such resources, and we would not expect Becoming One to be equally cost-effective in a context without pre-existing networks of community leaders or a culture of volunteering.

Scale and cost are directly correlated – the higher the scale, the lower the cost per beneficiary.

Increasing the number of faith leaders in each round also improves program cost effectiveness. These efficiency gains are particularly acute up to 300 faith leaders, meaning **a minimum of 300 faith leaders should be utilized for each round of Becoming One.**

Increasing the number of couples per faith leader in each round leads to lower costs per couple but may also lead to faith leader burn out and attrition.

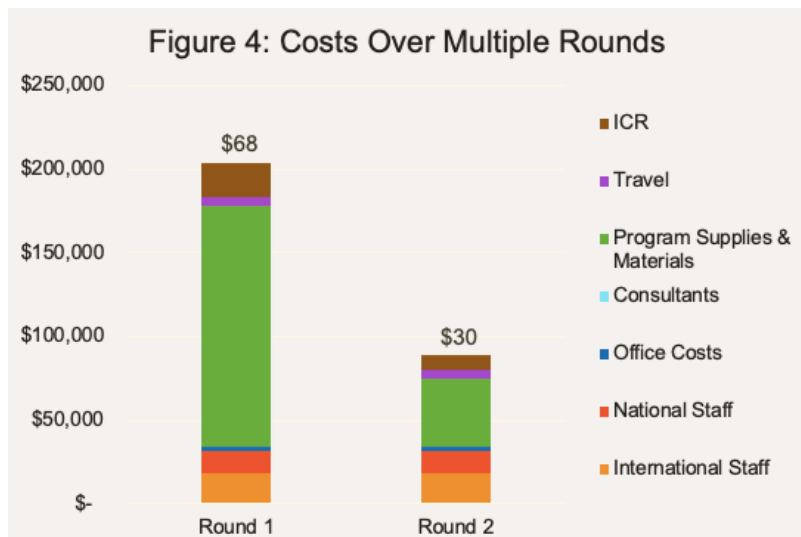
Figure 3 shows a simulation of how the cost per couple would decrease based on the number of couples one faith leader counsels over the 12-week period. Note, cost savings are large for each additional couple up to about six couples (\$10 - \$158). When each faith leader sees more than six couples, while there are still cost savings, they are limited.



Direct conversation with faith leaders suggested they were willing to increase from 6 to 10 couples per round of implementation, but no further.

The largest efficiency gains, however, are in multiple rounds of programming working with the same faith leaders.

The pilot round of Becoming One had 143 faith leaders, 867 couples, and cost \$183 per couple. If Becoming One scaled to 500 *new* faith leaders who reach 6 couples over a 5-month time frame, the cost per couple would drop to approximately \$68 without the development and inception costs included in the pilot (assuming program effectiveness stays the same). This is a 63% decrease in cost per couple in comparison to the pilot. If the 500 faith leaders from the new Round One then implemented a second round of Becoming One with 6 additional couples each, the cost per couple would drop to \$30 for the second round (Figure 4).



As the program reaches additional rounds of couples, cost per couple decreases as faith leader supply costs are spread across more clients. Because we see a larger decrease in cost over multiple rounds than by increasing the number of couples per faith leader in each round (past six couples) - adding more rounds of implementation by extending the program may be a more sustainable and cost-efficient model than increasing scale via the number of couples reached by each faith leader.

Analysis Method: Cost-Effectiveness at the IRC

The IRC is committed to maximizing the impact of each dollar spent to improve our clients' lives. Cost effectiveness analysis compares the costs of a program to the outcomes it achieved (e.g., cost per diarrheal incident avoided, cost per reduction in intra-family violence). Conducting cost effectiveness analysis of a program requires two types of information:

- 1) An impact evaluation on what a specific program achieved, in terms of outcomes
- 2) Data on how much it cost to produce that outcome

Teams across the IRC produce a wide range of outcomes, but cost effectiveness analysis requires that we know - based on impact research - exactly which outcomes were achieved and how much they changed, for a given program. For example, an impact evaluation might show a village that received IRC latrines and hygiene promotion had a 50 percent lower incidence of diarrhea than a village next to it which did not receive the IRC intervention. If so, we know the impact of our program: 50 percent decrease in diarrhea incidence. Cost effectiveness analysis becomes possible only when there is an impact study that quantifies the change in outcomes as a result of the IRC project.

At the same time, IRC runs impact evaluations, we gather data on how much the evaluated program costs. First, IRC staff build a list of inputs that were necessary to implement the evaluated program. If one thinks of a program as a recipe, the inputs are all the 'ingredients' necessary to make that dish. Budgets contain a great deal of information about the ingredients used and in what quantities, so reviewing the program budget is the first place to start. However, many of the line items in grant budgets are shared costs, such as finance staff or office rent, which contribute to multiple programs, not just the one included in the impact evaluation. When costs are shared across multiple programs, it is necessary to further specify what proportion of the input was used for the program. Specifying such costs in detail, while time-consuming, is important because it provides lessons about the structure of a program's inputs. We can divide costs into categories and determine whether resources are being allocated to the most important functions of program management and enable us to model alternative program structures and quantify the cost implications of different decisions.

¹ Devries, Karen M, Joelle YT Mak, Claudia Garcia-Moreno, Max Petzold, James C Child, Gail Falder, Stephen Lim, Loraine J Bacchus, Rebecca E Engell, Lisa Rosenfeld et al. 2013. "The global prevalence of intimate partner violence against women." *Science* 340 (6140): 1527–1528.

² DHS. 2011. "Demographic and Health Survey." World Bank. <http://data.worldbank.org/>

³ Heise, Lori. 2011. What Works to Prevent Partner Violence? An Evidence Overview. STRIVE - DFID.

⁴ Boyer, Christopher, et al. "Religious Leaders Can Motivate Men to Cede Power and Reduce Intimate Partner Violence: Experimental Evidence from Uganda." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, vol. 119, no. 31, 29 July 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2200262>

This work was conducted by the Best Use of Resources Initiative at the IRC. For questions or more information please contact us at airbel@rescue.org.

Preferred Citation

Hoyer, Kayla. 2022. "Protection Cost Effectiveness Brief – Becoming One." The International Rescue Committee.



Airbel Impact Lab
Research & Innovation at the IRC

| Becoming One Program Costs | Start-Up (2019 USD) | Implementation (2019 USD) |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| International Staff | 8,984 | 13,442 |
| Design Innovation Lead | 4,423 | 7,740 |
| World Vision Faith & Development Advisor | 4,561 | 5,702 |
| National Staff | 5,147 | 7,040 |
| Finance Controller | 201 | 252 |
| Human Resource Costs | 143 | 179 |
| Project Coordinator | 4,365 | 6,062 |
| Faith & Development Manager | 230 | 288 |
| Uganda Gender Specialist | 207 | 259 |
| Travel | 3,004 | 5,195 |
| Field Visits | - | 960 |
| Flights | 2,531 | 3,721 |
| In-Country Travel, Lodging, Per Diem | 474 | 513 |
| Trainings & Workshops | 13,551 | 1,750 |
| Becoming One Orientation | 2,534 | 1,734 |
| Channels of Hope Workshops | 8,659 | - |
| Faith Leader Orientation & Recruitment | 2,357 | 17 |
| Supplies & Activities | 35,741 | 6,029 |
| Couples Kits | 4,834 | 3,448 |
| Faith Leader Allowances & Sign-in Sheet | 2,105 | - |
| Faith Leader Follow-Ups | 2,646 | - |
| Material Delivery & Tax | 2,790 | 1,482 |
| Mobile Money Cost | 60 | - |
| Pastor Kits | 5,024 | 1,099 |
| Program Fliers | 473 | - |
| T-shirts | 772 | - |
| Faith Leader Mobile Phones & SD Cards | 15,633 | - |
| IPV Bracelets | 1,404 | - |
| Consultants | 16,403 | 19,734 |
| Junior Designer | 14,185 | 16,845 |
| Material Translation | 444 | 556 |
| Religious Consultant | 1,773 | 2,333 |
| Shared Costs | 13,425 | 8,791 |
| TOTAL | \$96,255 | \$61,982 |
| Cost per Couple (n = 867) | | \$183 |