

# Cost Effectiveness Analysis

## Governance Training in Zimbabwe



Within Zimbabwe, traditional leaders comprising chiefs, headmen, and village heads play an important role in local governance, managing community resource and maintaining stability. Lack of understanding by traditional leaders – and of communities – of their roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis local legislation has created local tensions, lessening these leaders' perceived impartiality and creating conflict within communities. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) ran a project starting in 2012 called “Supporting Traditional Leaders and Local Structures to Mitigate Community-Level Conflict,” which focused on building positive relationships between village heads and community leaders and promoting good governance.

Participants in the six-day training received instruction on gender, leadership, communication, human rights, mediation techniques, and conflict management. The IRC implemented two versions of the project: One that trained traditional leaders, or village heads; and another that also trained community leaders alongside the village heads. An impact evaluation by the organization Social Impact measured the effect of training on village heads' ability to govern and peacefully reduce conflict. An accompanying cost effectiveness analysis by the IRC examined the ingredients necessary to run such a project, as well as the cost per person and cost per outcome achieved.

**Training only one person per village cost \$1,700 on average per participant, but when community leaders accompanied village heads to the training it cost an average of \$1,320 per participant.** Data on both programmatic and support costs was collected during the first year of project implementation, when some one-time start-up costs, such as curriculum development, were incurred. As such, these numbers represent a high end estimate of the cost per person trained. The fact that training was more cost efficient (i.e. cost less per person) when more people were included does not necessarily mean that it was more cost effective; cost effectiveness depends on whether training more people caused an incremental improvement in the effectiveness of the trainings, beyond training village heads alone.

**Although it cost more in total to train community leaders as well as village heads, including a wider group of people was more cost effective because the training impacted governance outcomes only when the wider community was involved.** Having community leaders trained alongside village heads facilitated dissemination of information about rule of law to many community members, allowing community leaders to exert 'horizontal' pressure on village heads to hold to legal proceedings when needed. The impact evaluation and cost analysis suggest a preference for training community leaders alongside village heads, rather than training village heads alone.

**Costs for the training sessions were driven largely by variable costs, such as transportation, meals, and accommodations, which scale directly with the number of people participating.** To ensure that participants were capable and motivated to attend trainings, it was necessary to pay per diem allowances and incentives. Attendance at trainings is a key factor in the success of many community-level interventions. To ensure that community leaders participate, training projects often need to budget for incidentals that compensate for the opportunity costs community leaders face when participating in governance interventions.

### Why Cost Effectiveness at the IRC?

As an organization, the IRC strives to identify not only effective programming, but determine what resources are needed to operate effective projects at large scale. Cost effectiveness analysis measures how much impact an intervention achieves relative to the resources invested in it. When conducting an impact evaluation for a program, the IRC also examines the costs of the projects and disseminate the results.

## Supporting Traditional Leaders and Local Structures to Mitigate Conflict

Within Zimbabwe, village heads are focal points for community activities and play an important role in community stability. Under Zimbabwean law, they bear responsibility for good governance and land issues in the community, as well as the resolution of civil disputes. Village heads obtain their position through hereditary transition, and often have little technical, legal, or managerial knowledge and skills. These gaps can cause conflict, lack of transparency in decision making, and disregard for the rights of certain community members. The knowledge and skills gaps among village heads have also been subject to exploitation. The IRC saw an opportunity to reduce tensions and violence at the community level by improving attitudes toward peaceful conflict resolution and strengthening knowledge of good governance. Recognizing that village heads are strategic agents of change, the training was designed to encourage and enable village heads to use mediation skills to non-violently solve conflict. An impact evaluation was conducted to provide evidence about how much change was achieved through such trainings.

According to evaluator Social Impact, “The training of leaders involved six days of training, divided into two separate three-day sessions conducted about three months apart... sessions were divided into the following six modules: the local government structure in Zimbabwe, leadership and communication, conflict resolution and management, gender and traditional leadership, local leadership, and natural resource management. Modules were delivered through lectures, role plays, and group discussions.” Training sessions were run in partnership with a local Zimbabwean non-governmental organization, the Legal Resources Foundation.

### Research Question: How Does Training Influence Governance Outcomes?

An impact evaluation was conducted during the first year of the project, measuring the effect that trainings had on the ability of village heads to effectively make decisions and contribute to peaceful conflict resolution in their communities. Researchers were interested in the question of whether trainings would influence governance through the increase of knowledge among village heads, or through social pressure created when other community leaders were aware of the village heads’ roles and responsibilities. To test this, the project was implemented in two ways in participating villages. In the first, training participants included village heads, and the second included other types of community leaders such as village health workers, church leaders, farming group representatives, and school committee members.

	Village Heads Only Group	Village Heads Plus Group	Comparison Group (No Training, Year 1)
<b>Village Heads Trained?</b>	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Community Leaders Trained?</b>	No	Yes	No
<b># of Communities Included</b>	69	65	136

The IRC randomly assigned villages to one of these three groups (village heads only , village heads plus, or comparison) and villages in the same group were brought together for the purposes of conducting the training sessions. Ultimately, the IRC ran five training groups, two of which targeted “village heads only” communities, and three of which targeted “Village Heads Plus” communities. The IRC also conducted an extra session for any village heads or community leaders in the study who could not attend one of the other groupings, to get as many of the study participants who were selected for training to receive the intended services.

<sup>1</sup> Traditional Leaders Act and the Customary Law and Local Courts Act.

<sup>2</sup> Baldwin, Kate, and Shylock Muyengwa. Impact Evaluation of Supporting Traditional Leaders and Local Structures to mitigate Community-level Conflict in Zimbabwe. Social Impact, Inc., Aug. 2014. page 16

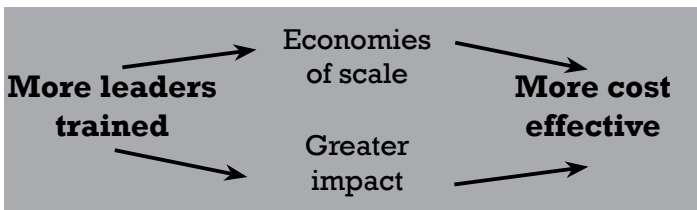


## Cost Effectiveness Results

### Adding community leaders to trainings increased impact dramatically, and improved the cost effectiveness of the project.

Impact was measured across four types of outcomes: Good governance by the village head, incidences of conflict in the village, threats of intimidation, and measures of social trust. The “Village Heads Plus” variant successfully improved knowledge of rule of law among village heads, measured by a 0.173 increase in score on their knowledge of the law index. It cost the IRC an average of \$2,649 in programmatic costs to train each of these villages (\$4,441 per village with support costs included). Further, the difference in scores on the good governance index between the two groups, .117 increase in the index value, indicates that switching from training village heads only to training that included community leaders significantly improved effectiveness.

While cost per village can be stated in terms of increase in knowledge of the law amongst village heads, other outcomes measured in this evaluation need to be considered. For villages in the “Village Heads Plus” group, the population’s awareness of threats of violence grew, and the level of social trust decreased slightly. The cost effectiveness results should be read within the context of these multi-faceted impacts on different areas of governance and stability.



### Cost per person trained was almost \$400 less for the group that trained community leaders alongside village heads.

Throughout the first year of the project, 132 village heads and 64 other community leaders received training across the two groups. The total cost per person trained was approximately \$1,700 per person when only village heads were included. This cost dropped to \$1,320 per person when community leaders were trained alongside village heads. Although the total cost was higher to train both village heads and community leaders, the “Village Heads Plus” group had an overall lower cost per trainee because the fixed costs, such as staff trainer time, were spread across more recipients.

Cost data was gathered during the first year of project implementation. During the second year, a greater number of community leaders received training and total spending

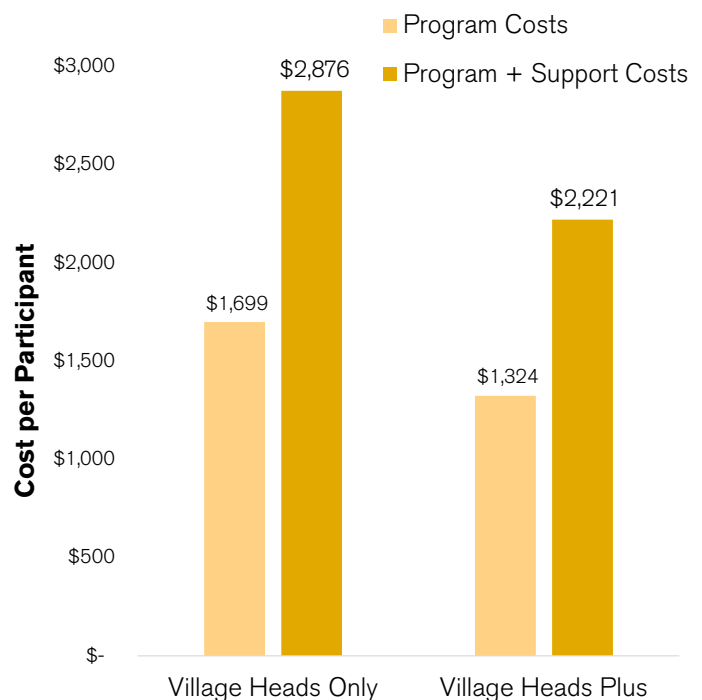
was significantly less compared to the first year. This analysis therefore represents an upper bound of the total cost per person and cost per outcome of this project.

### Training additional community leaders alongside the duty-bearing village heads yielded a lower cost per trainee and was crucial to affecting governance knowledge.

When only village heads were trained, no impact of training on people’s knowledge of the law—including through human rights, impartiality, or conflict management—was perceived. However, when community leaders also received training, the horizontal pressure that they could exert had both positive and unintended effects. As suggested in the impact evaluation report, “Community leaders who were trained alongside village heads were both able to ‘remind’ village heads of the legal framework after the training session, thereby checking abuses, and to disseminate information on rule of law to other members of the community.”

Considering that the cost to train double the number of individuals was not double the price, it is clear that economies of scale have taken effect; the cost to train additional community leaders, although higher, is not as great per person as the initial cost incurred to train the village heads. Since the mechanism of “horizontal pressure” is necessary to achieving impact on governance in other contexts, then this cost effectiveness analysis suggests that the incremental cost of training community leaders to exert such pressure is worth the investment.

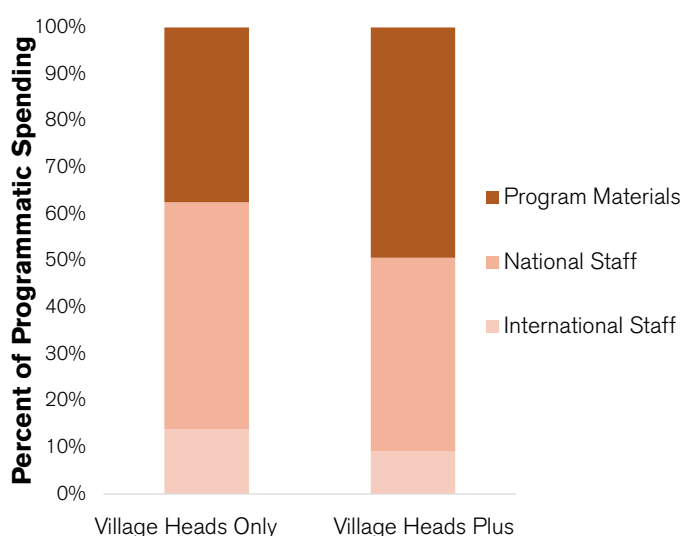
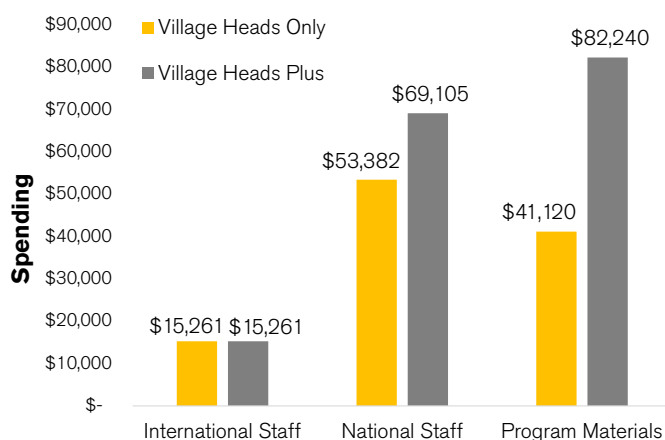
**Figure 1. Cost Breakdowns by Category**



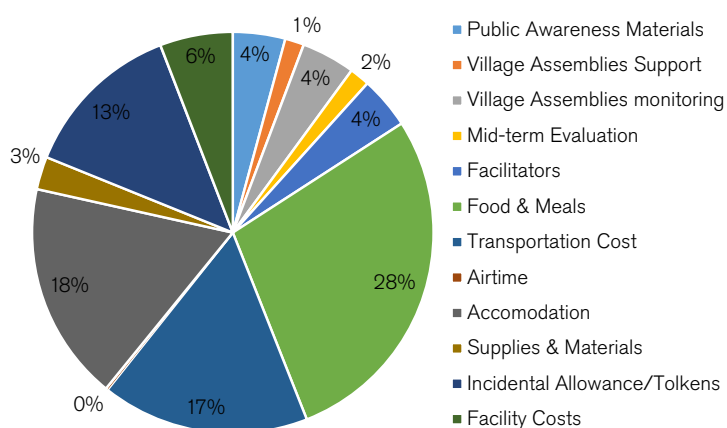
**Staff resources were key to project implementation, but when more community leaders were trained these staff resources could cover a greater number of people, driving down the cost per participant.** IRC national programmatic personnel included a project manager, a capacity-building coordinator, a grants and contracts manager, a technical officer, two drivers, and a number of casual laborers. International technical advisors also lent support by visiting the country during the planning and implementation process. The level of effort for international staff was the same regardless of the number of training participants, and national staff also showed economies of scale; although the number of people trained was more than twice as high in the “Village Heads Plus” group, the costs of national staff only increased by 32 percent relative to the “Village Heads Only” group (Figure 2).

**Each training session cost approximately \$25,000 in programmatic costs, such as for supplies, materials, and travel for participants.** Food and meals for training participants was the single largest expense category, accounting for nearly 30 percent of the direct spending on training sessions (see Figure 3). The fact that food, accommodation, travel and incidentals are a significant expense category is not surprising in this context. To ensure attendance, particularly among high-status village heads, the trainings must provide a certain level of amenities. Further, the fact that trainings lasted for three days and held at a central location meant that the IRC had to pay for transportation and lodging. This project exemplifies a fairly intensive training, requiring a higher level

**Figure 2. Cost Breakdowns by Category**



**Figure 3. Materials & Programmatic Costs**



of support per attendee. By contrast, an IRC cost efficiency analysis of teacher training projects in Afghanistan and Iraq showed much lower per diems and accommodation costs for participants. Contextual features, such as country of implementation and the type of person being trained, affect the volume of per-participant costs that must be incurred.

In Zimbabwe, lower-than-usual fixed costs may also be driven by the fact that the IRC acquired training space from local government at a much lower cost than market rate, thanks to good relationships with the government. Facility costs varies by context, depending largely on the availability of facilities and norms about paying for community space; in other training projects run by the IRC, rental facilities can total a much higher proportion of total costs.

This work was conducted by the Best Use of Resources Initiative at the IRC, and supported by the UK Department for International Development. Please contact Caitlin Tulloch (caitlin.tulloch@rescue.org) with any questions.

