



Recruiting and Motivating Effective Community Health Workers in Zambia

Employing community health workers may help governments address the shortage of healthcare providers in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, it is unclear how offering incentives such as career advancement opportunities might affect who self-selects into community health worker jobs. This evaluation tests the effect of two incentive strategies on applicants' characteristics and job performance. Preliminary results show that making career incentives rather than social incentives salient attracted workers who were more qualified and performed better on the job and had similar levels of pro-social preferences.

The evaluation is now in the final stages of endline data collection with four, five-person survey teams deployed to 47 districts across Zambia. The teams are surveying a total of 752 households to gather a broad set of potential indicators on CHW performance including the frequency of the CHW visits, residents' knowledge of basic medical facts, and anthropometric measures for children under five.

Survey teams have faced numerous challenges, from the logistics of surveying in extremely remote areas during the rainy season to surveying amidst election campaigns. They have overcome punctured tires, vehicle breakdowns, and getting stuck in muddy ditches. They also encountered electoral commissioners and presidential hopefuls helicoptering throughout the countryside, giving them a closer look at the historic events taking place in Zambia.

In the next month, the final two teams will complete surveying and return to Lusaka. Researchers will then begin analysis of the survey data, looking for patterns and differences between the two CHW recruitment groups. IPA looks forward to sharing the final results of this analysis with our partners throughout 2015-16.

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Improving Parental Recognition of Developmental Deficits in Children

In Chipata, Eastern Province we are assessing the impact of two simple programs designed to improve child health by increasing parents' awareness of their children's physical development, with a specific focus on stunting. The randomized evaluation is being conducted in a subsample of 550 households of a larger study that is working to improve food security during the hungry season. The first program distributes full-size growth charts to households so parents can measure their children every three months. The second program implements quarterly community-based child assessments. During these community meetings field teams measure the children, remind parents of the importance of protein, and provide a small amount of supplemental food to children that are stunted. Our hypothesis is that improved parental knowledge of their children's relative growth will increase parental demand for health and nutrition services and thus result in better child health.

In September 2014, we conducted the baseline survey, distributed growth charts, and held our first set of community meetings which were attended by over 1,200 children in 40 villages. We are currently in the process of conducting our second round of meetings in the same villages.

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The Zambia Health Bulletin is designed to keep stakeholders and partners informed of on-going research in the Zambian health sector.

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