

# Recruiting and Motivating Community Health Workers in Zambia



Primary investigators: Nava Ashraf, Oriana Bandiera, and Scott Lee

Nampaka Nkumbula  
Policy Associate  
[nnkumbula@poverty-action.org](mailto:nnkumbula@poverty-action.org)



# Summary

To recruit qualified community health assistants (CHAs), researchers and the Ministry of Health compared two strategies:

- Emphasizing **social benefits** (intrinsic motivation)
- Emphasizing **career benefits**

They found that CHAs motivated by career benefits had **better qualifications, performed better on the job, and resulted in improved health outcomes** for the communities they served than those motivated by social benefits.



# Policy Context

- **Community health workers** can help to address shortage of healthcare providers.
- New civil service position created in 2010: **the Community Health Assistant (CHA) in an effort by the Ministry of Health to standardize CHW training and qualifications in communities.**
- CHAs undergo a year of formal training, and then **return to their communities** to work.
- They are the **first line of healthcare** for Zambians living in the most remote regions of the country.



# Research Question

- Ministry of Health partnered with researchers and IPA to evaluate strategies for recruiting and motivating CHAs.
- The success of public services like the CHA program depends on the effort of the workers who provide them.
- How do different incentives affect who self-selects into community health assistant jobs?
- Effort can be increased in two ways:
  - Incentives that directly reward effort
  - Selection of workers predisposed towards exerting effort (high intrinsic motivation)
- **Which strategy attracts more qualified, higher-performing workers?**



# Program Design

Ministry of Health posted advertisements for CHA position in 48 districts in rural Zambia

48 districts randomly divided into **two groups**:

- Recruitment posters emphasizing **social benefits** of becoming a CHA
  - Serving one's community and becoming a leader
- Recruitment posters emphasizing **career benefits** of becoming a CHA
  - Opportunities for promotion and further professional development



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH



DESIGNATED HEALTH CENTRE:	FOR POSTING AT:

## TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

### ONE-YEAR COURSE IN COMMUNITY HEALTH

The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Zambia is launching a new national Community Health Worker (CHW) strategy and invites applicants to participate in the inaugural training of community health workers.

The training will begin on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2010 and will be held at the Provincial level for selected applicants. All participation costs, including transportation, meals and accommodation will be covered by the Ministry of Health.

#### BENEFITS:

- Learn about the most important health issues in your community
- Gain the skills you need to prevent illness and promote health for your family and neighbors
- Work closely with your local health post and health centre
- Be a respected leader in your community

#### QUALIFICATIONS:

- Zambian National
- Grade 12 completed with two "O" levels
- Age 18-45 years
- Endorsed by Neighborhood Health Committee within place of residence
- Preference will be given to women and those with previous experience as a CHW

#### APPLICATION METHOD:

Submit to the DESIGNATED HEALTH CENTRE indicated above:

- Completed application form with necessary endorsements. If no blank forms are attached to this notice, kindly obtain a blank one at the nearest health centre.
- Photocopy of school certificate documenting completion of Grade 12 and two "O" levels.
- Photocopy of Zambian national registration card.

For more information: Contact the designated health centre indicated above.

**Counseling and Support**

**Care and Treatment**

**Health Education**

**Want to serve your community? Become a CHW!**

**CLOSING DATE: 30<sup>th</sup> JULY 2010.**  
Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for interview.

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#### BENEFITS:

- Become a highly trained member of Zambia's health care system
- Interact with experts in medical fields
- Access future career opportunities including:
  - Clinical Officer
  - Nurse
  - Environmental Health Technologist

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**Nursing**

**Clinical Medicine**

**Environmental & Public Health**

**Become a CHW to gain skills and boost your career!**

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# Program Design

- Aside from emphasis on benefits, recruitment materials and selection processes were otherwise identical
  - Applicants needed to be Zambian nationals, age 18-45
  - High school diploma and passing grades for at least 2 subjects on secondary school exams
- Government received over 2,400 applications
- 314 applicants accepted and trained, 307 began work as CHAs



# Evaluation

- 2010-2014
- Researchers:
  - Nava Ashraf (London School of Economics and Political Science)
  - Oriana Bandiera (London School of Economics and Political Science)
  - Scott Lee (Harvard University)
- Researchers used several data sources to determine which CHAs were more effective :
  - Data from mobile platform
  - Administrative records
  - Household surveys





# Background on IPA involvement

## Timeline

- CHA recruitment: 2010
- CHA training: 2011-2012
- CHA midline survey: 2013
- Household endline survey 1: 2014
- Household endline survey 2: 2016-17



# Results

## **Workers drawn by career benefits were more effective CHAs than those drawn by social benefits.**

- Performed 29 percent more household visits
- Attended twice as many community meetings
- More likely to use health facilities for childbirth (30%), health checks (24%), child weighings (22%), and immunizations (20%)
- Significant increases in healthy practices among households they served
  - Breastfeeding, proper stool disposal, deworming treatment, immunization schedules
- Children under 5 years old who had these CHAs were 5 percentage points less likely to be underweight

\* As compared to “community” recruited CHAs



# Policy Lessons

1. The ways in which workers self-select for public service jobs have significant effects on service provision.
2. Offering civil service positions with career opportunities attracts workers who deliver services with remarkable health impacts in their communities.



# Impact

- The Ministry of Health and The Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) have used the career incentives posters to recruit, train, and deploy 1,400 CHAs nationwide.
- Given the Ministries current targets this could reach 3, 400 in 2020.



# Further Research

## 2016-17 Endline

### Full-sample endline evaluation:

- Visit all 307 CHAs from initial 2011-2012 cohort
  - 47 districts
  - 162 health posts
- Conduct interviews with:
  - Households (16 per HP)
  - CHAs (1-2 per HP)
  - Health facility In-charge (1 per HP)
  - Collect administrative data from HMIS and ECZ



# Thank you



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