

In emergency situations, case management plays a vital role in connecting the most vulnerable members of a population with the services that they need to survive and thrive. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) addresses child protection concerns through case management services in both refugee/internally displaced person (IDP) camps and urban settings.

IRC case management services identify and assess the needs of children with particular vulnerabilities, such as unaccompanied and separated children, connect them with critical services needed through an established referral network, and ensure that children remain safe and secure. Typically, the IRC's child case management services last between six and 18 months, depending on the child's individual needs. This analysis covers six IRC case management programs in five countries and includes programs providing services within refugee/IDP camps and in urban settings.

Case worker responsibilities include conducting needs assessments, providing material support and accommodation, and referring children to medical and psychosocial support services. The value of material support, accommodation, or referral services can have a significant impact on cost levels. This analysis considers only the specific costs of providing case management to the IRC, not the cost of in-kind donations or services referred.

Personnel are the largest expense—approximately 64 percent of total cost—for case management programs for at-risk children. For the programs included in this analysis, the dollar value spent on national staff was significantly higher than international staff, with approximately \$3 spent on national staff to every \$1 spent on international staff. For case management programs, where costs are heavily allocated towards personnel, it is especially important to establish a robust staffing plan at the onset of a program to ensure that staff resources are matched to needs.

Sharing fixed costs with other programs operated by the organization reduces the percent of a budget dedicated to support functions such as payroll or procurement. Programs that are part of multi-sector camp operations are, on average, more cost efficient than urban programs only conducting case management services, due to the volume of other activities that share fixed costs. Eastern Africa grants had two-to-four times the volume of other activities sharing the same fixed costs, as compared to programs in the Middle East.

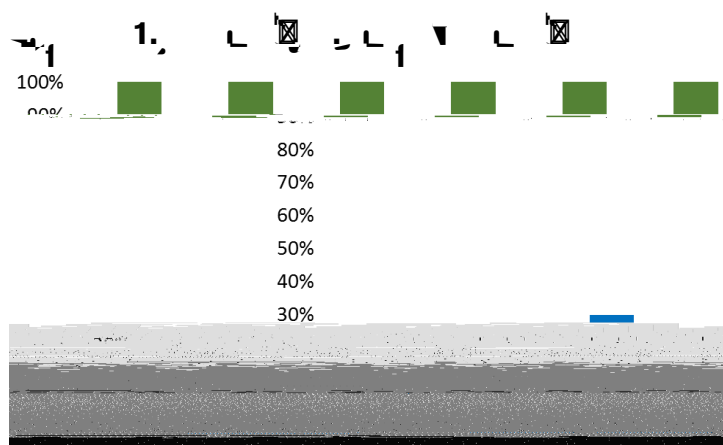


Among programs in high-income countries, support costs have been 11 and 30 percent of total costs.

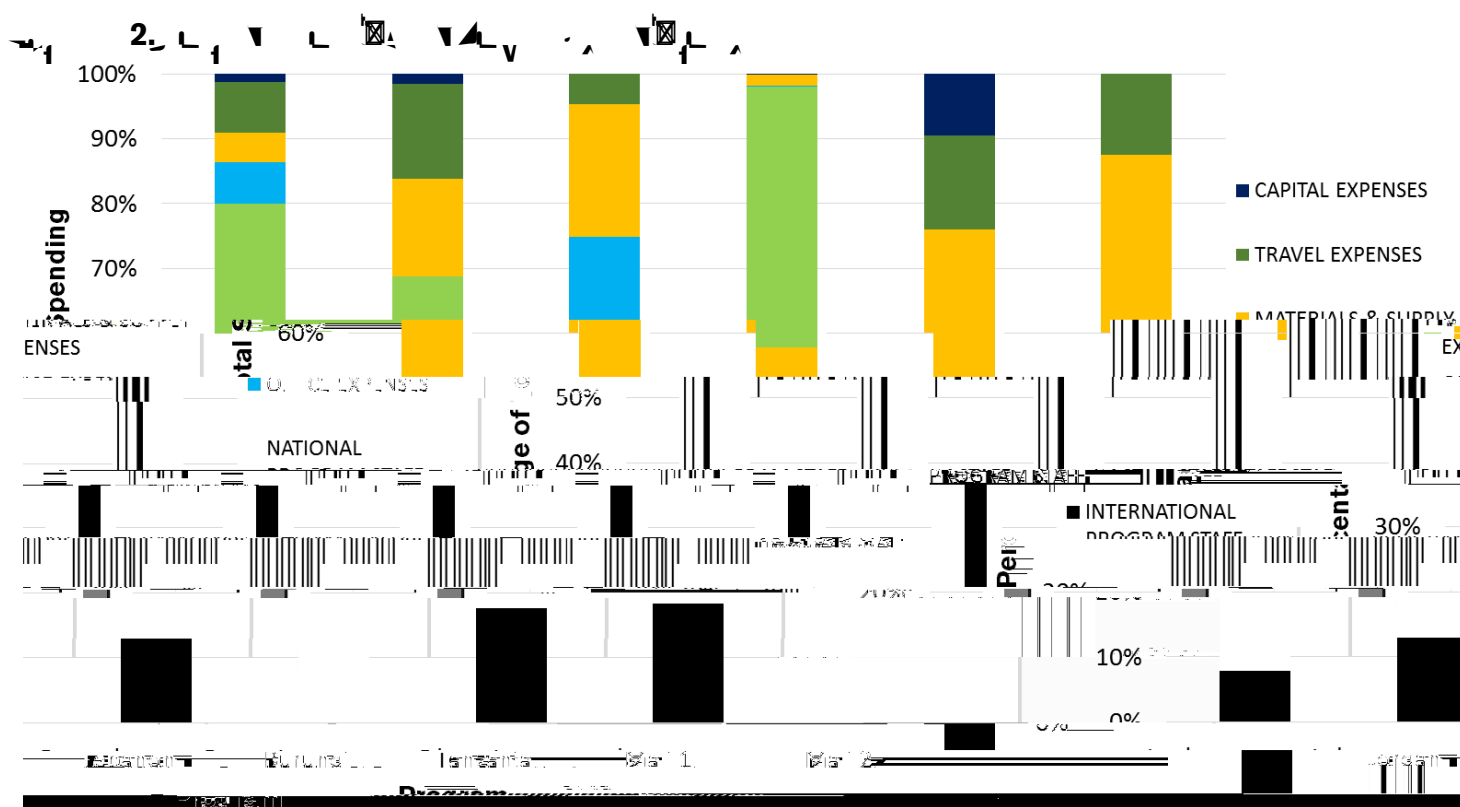
Since effective programming relies on country management and office resources such as payroll staff or office rent, support costs should be included in an analysis of the resources necessary to deliver humanitarian programs. Between 11 and 30 percent of total costs were support costs, in line with findings in other cost efficiency analyses conducted by the IRC of its interventions.

Staff time is the major cost driver in case management, and the number of personnel may increase in proportion to the number of children needed to align with child protection minimum standards. Programs in the Middle East and Tanzania had a relatively high proportion of national staff costs compared to international staff costs. As national staff are generally less expensive than international staff, a shift towards national staff—where possible and without compromising program quality—can reduce overall costs.

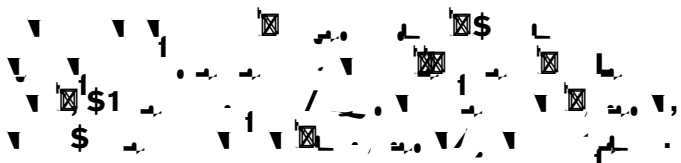
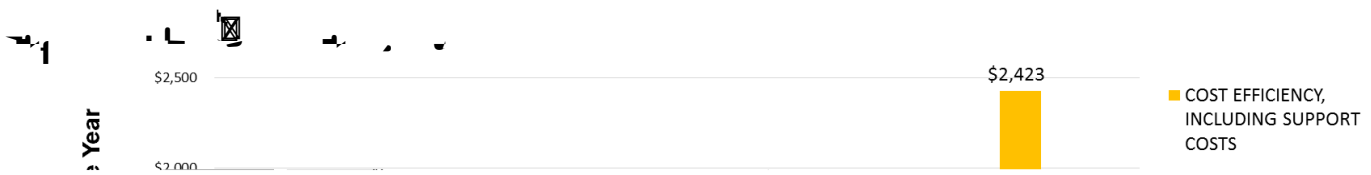
Notably, high proportions of costs dedicated to national staff in the Middle East is partly driven by the higher local wages in these middle-income countries as



compared to Burundi or Mali. In such situations, the dollar value of national staff time may be a greater proportion of total spending, even if the number of national staff in two regions under comparison is the same. Thus, if the goal is to track efficiency gains through employing national staff, and to compare across programs in different contexts, the percentage of positions held by national staff (rather than percent of costs going to national staff) provides a better metric.



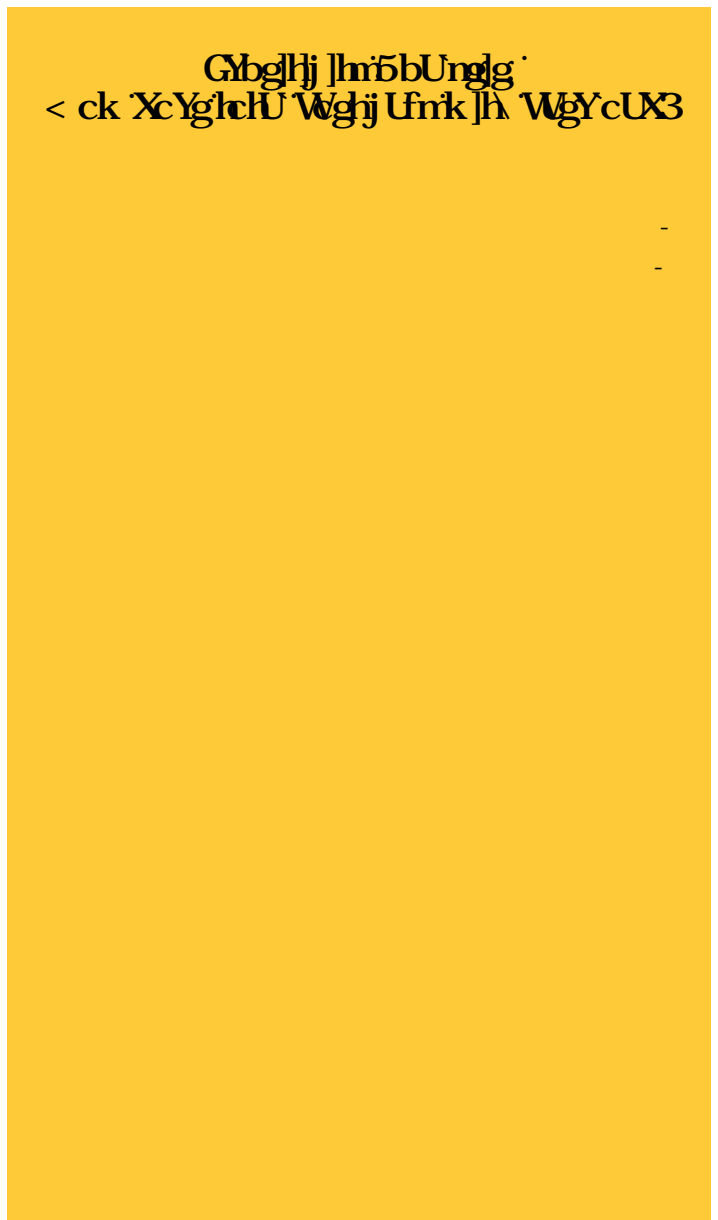
<sup>1</sup> See the IRC's *Cost Efficiency Analysis: NFI in Cameroon, Tanzania* and *Cost Efficiency Analysis: Technical Assistance in Pakistan*



Cost per child is driven, in part, by local price levels-- programs in middle-income countries like Jordan and Lebanon must pay higher prices for the same goods, driving up the cost per child. At the same time, variations in cost and efficiency also occur across regions: Tanzania costs less per child than Burundi, and Jordan costs less per child than Lebanon. While local price levels do drive the cost efficiency of programs, there is still potential for improvement in high- and low-cost contexts alike.

Programs in this analysis operated at a large scale. With the exception of rural Mali, more than 900 children were provided case management services in the Middle East and eastern Africa. Scale can refer both to the number of people served by the output of a particular activity, as well as the size of the overall package of activities that includes the activity.

Spreading grant management costs across many sectors of an activity leads to lower support costs per sector of programming. Jordan and Lebanon case management programs were funded by grants for protection programming in urban settings, while the Burundi and Tanzania grants funded a variety of different services within refugee/IDP camps. The more that fixed costs were spread among activities in terms of space, capital expenses, and management time, the more cost efficient case management programs become.



The influx of Syrian refugees to Lebanon caused the demand for case management services to significantly increase. Beyond the funding for case management services detailed above, in 2014 the IRC provided supplemental training to its nearly 500 frontline case workers to ensure they understood and were equipped to handle child protection issues. The training included IRC caseworkers and staff from other protection programs within and outside of the IRC.

The cost per caseworker can be divided by the average number of children each caseworker supported during a year to provide insight into how much the IRC invested per child and whether the improvement in services was likely worth that cost. When considering a that cost hundreds of dollars per beneficiary, the value-add of improved case management can be thought of relative to the incremental cost per child. In this case, spending the \$8 per child is likely to be an efficient use of resources.

The IRC's supplemental training component in Lebanon cost \$418 on average per individual trained. The ability to reach this cost per caseworker was based on covering a high number of individuals with a single training. In contexts where the volume of staff that work on protection needs

is low, such training programs may incur a relatively higher cost per trainee. The expected attrition of staff is another aspect to consider when deciding to invest in training. Investing in training is worthwhile when the knowledge gained by staff is expected to be put to use over a long period of time. A high degree of caseworker turnover challenges the value of investing in individual capacity.

While this analysis can demonstrate the average cost per child served, the Lebanon training component case study highlights the importance of measuring the impact of training. With limited funds, can organizations better improve outcomes for children by reducing caseloads among staff, or by providing caseworkers with supplemental training? These questions about how case management programs and trainings drive costs and impacts are best addressed in additional cost effectiveness studies.

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The IRC is committed to maximizing the impact of each dollar spent to improve our clients' lives. As the IRC's CEO wrote in a 2015 article in *Foreign Affairs*, "Donors need to not just double the amount of aid directed to the places of greatest need but also undertake reforms that seek to double the productivity of aid spending." The Best Use of Resource initiative is focused on improving the reach and impact of the IRC by using internally available data to better understand the cost of delivering key IRC interventions. Generating evidence about cost efficiency and cost effectiveness will enable the IRC to cost and compare different approaches and their related impact, ultimately allowing decisions that achieve the best use of resources.

"Cost efficiency analysis" compares the costs of a program to the outputs it achieved (e.g. cost per latrine constructed, or cost per family provided with parental coaching), while "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 analysis of a program requires two types of information:

- 1) Data on what a program achieved, in terms of outputs or outcomes, and