

Costing the scale up of parenting programmes in South Africa

Carmen Abdoll and Lugisani Ragwala



Executive summary

Any national strategy to prevent interpersonal violence should include evidence-based parenting programmes that support caregivers. Research on the effectiveness of parenting programmes for reducing the risk factors for neglect, abuse and violence against children is growing. But determining the cost of large-scale delivery of these programmes has been difficult. This report summarises the costs involved in scaling up parenting programmes, and guides users of the associated costing model.

Key findings

The costing model when calibrated for a single non-profit organisation (NPO) delivering 20 Sinovuyo Kids Parenting Programmes (Parenting for Lifelong Health for Young Children) in a year produces the following key results:

- The largest cost item is personnel – accounting for 45% of the total budget in the first year, increasing to 68% in subsequent years, as the initial setup costs fall away.
- The per capita (families reached) cost is R4 776 in the first year. As the programme gets scaled up, the per capita cost decreases to around R4 242 per family.
- The per capita (children reached) cost is R1 592 in the first year – assuming each family has an average of three children.
- Setup accounts for 20% of total cost in the first year. The main cost drivers are tools of trade (cellphones, laptops, data systems) and staff training (professional fees, catering, travel). These costs aren't incurred in subsequent years unless new staff are employed.
- Translating the programme for a particular community requires additional setup costs.
- Ongoing operational costs are driven by personnel and inputs for running courses; key costs being catering and venue hire. Using community halls could save venue costs.
- Once setup is done, trained facilitators could learn to deliver other parenting programmes, or programmes that address issues such as harmful gender norms. This would reduce the cost of delivering a suite of interventions.

Recommendations

The costing model is designed to be used by government departments, non-governmental organisations, funders, development partners and researchers, when developing plans and budgets for scaling up parenting programme delivery.

- Non-governmental organisations can use the costing model to develop applications for funding to deliver evidence-based parenting programmes. The model can be adapted to the local situation and be updated yearly for costs.
- The national Social Development Department can use the costing model to develop a bid to National Treasury for either a conditional grant or increased funding to support scaling up parenting programme

delivery. This is in line with South Africa's commitment as a pathfinder country under the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children.

- Provincial Social Development departments can use the costing model to develop bids to their respective provincial treasuries for funds to scale up parenting programmes in their provinces.
- National and provincial treasury officials can use the costing model to motivate for increased allocations to parenting programmes in the budget process. Parenting programmes compete with other programmes for funding during the budget process – with more evidence treasury officials can better motivate for increased parenting programme funds.
- Stakeholders can use the costing model to develop advocacy materials they can use to engage Members of Parliament and the Legislature and public officials on the need to scale up parenting programme delivery.

What we know about parenting programmes

Group-based evidence-led parenting programmes that support caregivers in building positive relationships with their children are important elements of any strategy to prevent violence. This has been recognised by the World Health Organization (WHO),¹ the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, and South Africa's Gender-based Violence and Femicide National Strategic Plan.²

Several well-researched parenting programmes for South African parents have been developed and tested in the country.³ In addition, non-governmental organisations that deliver evidence-led parenting programmes have since 2017 formed the South African Parenting Programme Implementers Network (SAPPIN), and have the capacity to expand their services.

Clowns Without Borders and the Mikhulu Trust are two South African organisations that act as purveyors of three of the four Parenting for Lifelong Health programmes supported by the WHO and the United Nations Children's Fund.

They provide training for parenting facilitators, support to monitor and evaluate the programmes, and ensure that when the programmes are delivered, they are done so with fidelity (i.e. as they were intended to be delivered).

In short, South Africa is well positioned to start moving towards making these programmes available on a larger scale. This policy brief is a guide to using the associated costing model. It gives NGOs, government officials from national and provincial treasuries, and development partners and donors a sophisticated but easy-to-use model for expanding the reach of parenting programmes.

Background

Between May 2020 and April 2021 the Violence Prevention Forum, in partnership with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit and Cornerstone Economic Research, offered a series of workshops to government officials, NGOs and researchers to help them understand how government's budget process works.

The series was concluded with steps to build a costing model that could be used to strengthen budget proposals for new and existing programmes that contribute to the prevention of violence. The participants highlighted the need to develop a costing model for the scale up of parenting programmes. Such a model could be included in the costing for the National Strategic Plan on Gender-based Violence and Femicide.

What followed was a process to cost the Sinovuyo Parenting Programme, which is one of the four Parenting for Lifelong Health initiatives. In South Africa, Clowns Without Borders is the purveyor of the two Sinovuyo programmes – Sinovuyo Kids and Sinovuyo Teens:

- The Sinovuyo Kids programme aims to help caregivers communicate better with their children, set boundaries, find pleasure and fulfilment in their relationships with their children, and reduce violence.
- The Sinovuyo Teens programme aims to reduce maltreatment, neglect and abuse of teenagers through enabling positive relationship building within families.

Clowns Without Borders provides training and capacity building to institutions wishing to deliver the two parenting programmes in communities in South Africa. The costing model can be adapted to cost either programme by changing the policy parameters. The costs shown in this report are for the Sinovuyo Kids programme. This policy brief summarises the findings from the costing research.

Developing a costing model

The costing model was built with input from Clowns Without Borders, implementers at the Seven Passes Initiative (which has delivered all four Parenting for Lifelong Health programmes since 2016), and participants from the budget training workshops.

The following steps were followed:

- Document search – to understand parenting programmes, their importance and how they are being implemented. These documents include guidelines, standard operating procedures, norms and standards (where they exist), or any related research.
- Key interviews – to get an understanding of the implementation of the process from the perspective of the implementers and trainers already working in the space. These interviews are important in order to include any deviations from procedures in the document search.
- Process flow – to map the processes and procedures, including key role players.
- Costing model – to put the key elements from the process flow into an Excel-based costing model to calculate and summarise costs.

The key questions that the costing model seeks to answer are:

- What are the key costs of implementing a parenting programme such as Sinovuyo?
- What are the cost implications for scaling up a parenting programme of this nature across South Africa?

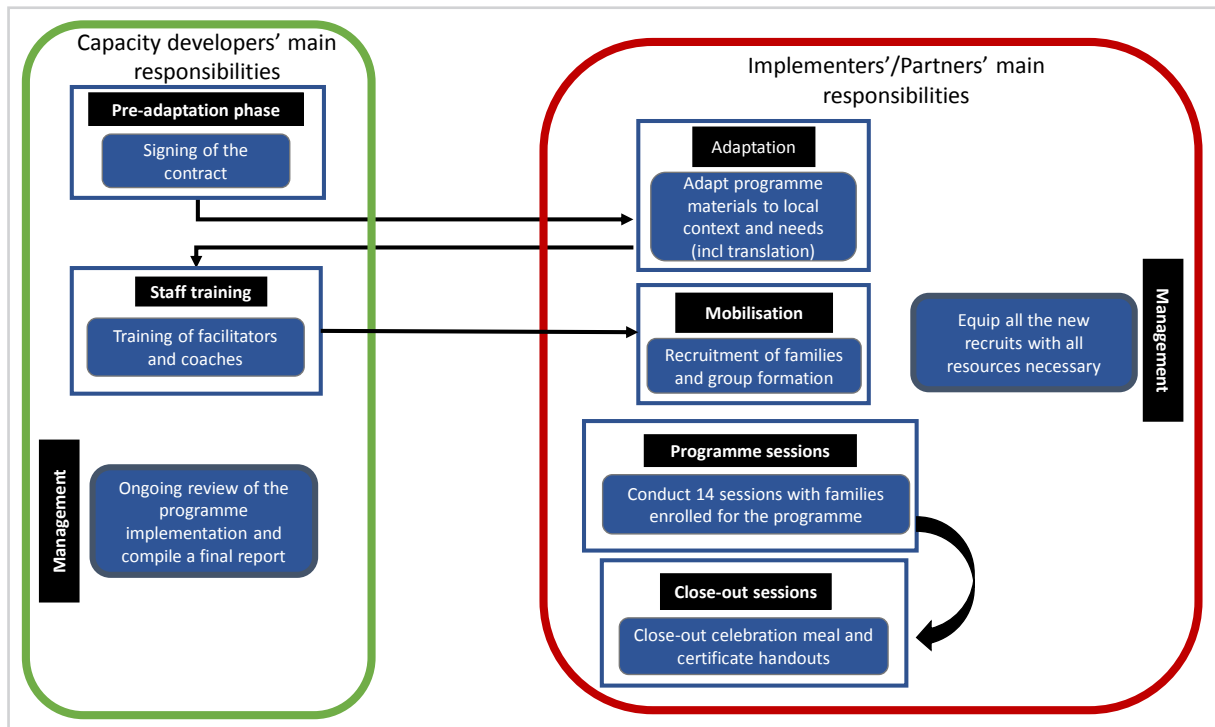
Process flow

Chart 1 is an overview of the parenting programme broken down into the key activities and role players involved, from the planning phase to the implementation of the initiative in communities. The process starts with a number of meetings between implementers and capacity developers/trainers to understand the needs of the implementers. These roles are discussed below.

Key roles of capacity developers

The main role of the capacity developers is to train trainers. Clowns Without Borders is the capacity developer for the Sinovuyo Kids programme. Parenting programme facilitators (who will actually deliver the programme to parents) are recruited from the community by the implementing organisation.

Chart 1: Parenting programme process flow



Source: Authors

Key roles of the capacity developers include:

- **Management** – contract management and ongoing review of the programme implementation.
- **Facilitator training** – this involves teaching and imparting skills and knowledge of positive parenting to the identified facilitators of the programme. Facilitator training takes up to five days plus seven days of in-practice monitoring.
- **Training of coaches** – facilitators are supported by coaches who are also trained by capacity developers. Coaches provide guidance and support over the 12-week parenting programme. Coaching training happens over three days plus seven days of in-practice monitoring.

Key roles of implementers/partners

The implementers (in this case the Seven Passes Initiative) are responsible for:

- **Programme adaptation** – the community context and culture will have a huge influence on how the parenting programme is packaged and delivered to meet the needs of the families who will participate in the programme. Therefore the implementers are responsible for adapting the programme to meet the needs of the community. This can include translation of course materials.
- **Family mobilisation** – recruit families to participate in the course and group formation.
- **Programme delivery** – the programme runs over 12 weeks.
- **Close-out** – the close-out of the programme involves a celebratory meal and small gift for each participant.

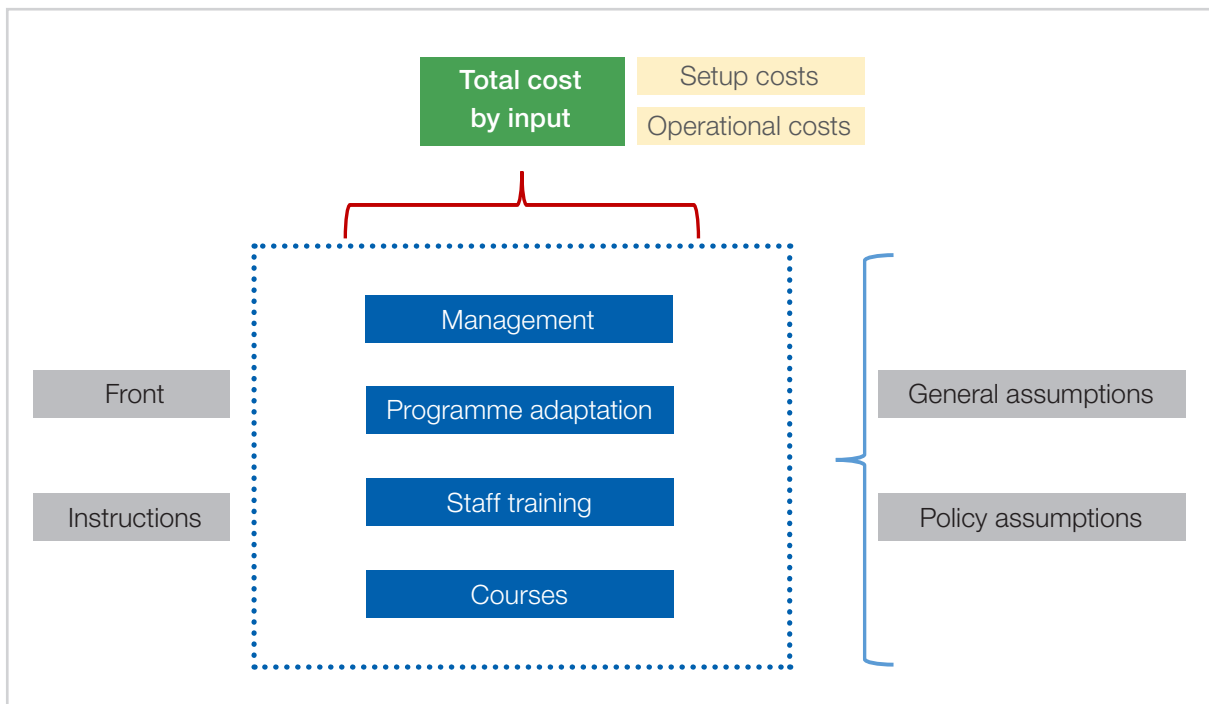
Costing model

Structure of the costing model

Chart 2 shows the structure of the parenting programme costing model. It consists of the following worksheets:

- The general assumptions sheet that feeds through to many of the calculations in the working sheets such as inflation, operational expenses as a percent of total salary costs, and capital expenses as a percent of total salary costs.
- The policy assumptions sheet, which presents a summary of the total costs summarised according to setup and ongoing costs. In addition, the sheet contains assumptions of key policy choices that feed through to many of the calculations in the working sheets, such as: number of NPOs capacitated to run programmes, average number of courses run by NPOs per year, number of participants in the courses, number of days required for the course, number of general managers per NPO, number of senior facilitators per NPO, number of junior facilitators per NPO, number of debriefing sessions per facilitator, and translation of programme (where needed).
- The total costs by input sheet shows the total costs by input type of the programme elements.
- The management sheet shows the costs required to manage the parenting programme.
- The programme adaptation sheet shows the costs under the programme adaptation.
- The staff training sheet shows the costs of the staff training.
- The courses (12-day parenting programme) sheet shows the costs to run the courses.

Chart 2: Costing model overview



Source: Parenting costing model

In order for the model to work optimally in a changing environment, a few assumptions have been made that can be changed by the users as the need arises. These are outlined in the sections below.

General assumptions

The model has a set of general assumptions that are used in all the sheets. These assumptions can be changed by the user to reflect their need. These are shown on the general assumptions sheet. The categories of general assumptions are:

- Financial assumptions.
- Personnel-related.
- Equipment and materials.
- Workshop and programme session costs.
- Travel, accommodation and subsistence.

Policy assumptions

The policy assumptions are shown on the policy assumptions sheet. The assumptions can be changed by the users to tailor the model to reflect their context and requirements for the parenting programme implementation.

Chart 3: Policy assumptions

Policy assumptions	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Number of NPOs capacitated to run programmes	1	5	10
Total number of NPOs running programmes	1	6	16
Average number of courses run by NPOs per year	20	20	20
Average total number of courses run per year	20	120	320
Number of participants per course	20	20	20
Number of working weeks in the year	45	45	45
Number of weeks (one day a week) required for course	12	12	12
Minimum number of facilitators per course	2	2	2
Total number of participants (families)	400	2 400	6 400
Average number of children per family	3	3	3
Total number of children reached	1 200	7 200	19 200
PER CAPITA (family)	4 776	4 299	4 242
PER CAPITA (children reached)	1 592	1 433	1 414
Number of general managers per NPO	1	1	1
Number of senior facilitators per NPO	4	4	4
Number of junior facilitators per NPO	4	4	4
Number of debriefing sessions per facilitator	4	4	4
Total debriefings per year	384	2 304	6 144

For illustrative purposes, the model has been set to accommodate one NGO capacitated in the first year, with the average number of courses that an NGO can run per year set as 20 and 20 participants attending each course. It is assumed that the number of senior and junior facilitators at each NGO is set at four each. This gives a cost of R1 592 per child reached in the first year.

Model outputs

Total cost summary

Based on the parameters set above, the cost of implementing a typical parenting programme is R1.9 million in the first year (one programme at one NGO). This cost is made up of R391 384 in setup costs and R1.5 million in ongoing operational costs.

Chart 4: Cost summary

Cost summary	Total cost			Setup Cost			Operating cost		
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Management (of the NPO/implementers)	1 193 970	7 381 448	20 212 256	87 300	456 012	953 064	1 106 670	6 925 436	19 259 192
Programme adaptation	18 404	92 999	192 731	18 404	92 999	192 731			
Staff training	195 680	1 022 134	2 136 261	195 680	1 022 134	2 136 261			
Courses	502 450	1 820 338	4 609 697	90 000	94 023	98 254	412 450	1 726 315	4 511 443
	1 910 504	10 316 919	27 150 945	391 384	1 665 168	3 380 310	1 519 120	8 651 750	23 770 635

The escalation of costs in the second and third year is due to more NGOs being capacitated in those years (see policy assumptions). These parameters can be changed.

Management

For each implementing NPO there are one manager, four senior facilitators and four junior facilitators. These parameters can be changed on the policy assumption sheet. It is assumed that the general manager is equipped to manage multiple programmes that are being offered by the NPO.

Chart 5: General management costs

	Estimated number of units			Cost		
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
General management						
General operational manager	1	6	16	120 000	752 184	2 096 086
Facilitator	4	24	64	360 000	2 256 552	6 288 258
Junior facilitator	4	24	64	288 000	1 805 242	5 030 607
Debriefing	384	2 304	6 144	134 400	842 446	2 347 616
General operational expenses				192 000	1 203 494	3 353 738
Laptops	9	45	90	45 000	235 058	491 270
Cellphones	9	45	90	31 500	164 540	343 889
Internet connectivity	9	45	90	10 800	56 414	117 905
Subtotal - General management				1 181 700	7 315 930	20 069 369

The tools of trade for personnel are once-off costs that are incurred at the beginning of the implementation of a new programme. These items include laptops, cellphones and internet connectivity.

In addition to general management, this sheet contains costs related to the review of the programme throughout its implementation. The costs are based on consulting fees, however the review can be done in-house by the NGO as the tools for doing the review are provided by the capacity developers.

However it's important to still include the cost of an item even if it is done in-house to illustrate that it does take time and effort and should be included in the budget.

Chart 6: Programme review costs

	Estimated number of units			Cost		
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
<i>Programme review</i>						
Programme mid-term review	1	5	10	1 364	7 123	14 887
Measuring the impact of the programme	1	6	16	1 364	8 548	23 819
Final report	3	15	30	4 091	21 369	44 661
Travel	1	5	10	4 000	20 894	43 668
Accommodation	1	5	10	1 000	5 224	10 917
Subsistence	1	5	10	452	2 361	4 935
<i>Subtotal - Programme review</i>				12 270	65 518	142 887

Programme adaptation

Programme adaptation involves tailoring the course materials, under guidance from the capacity developers, to best suit the needs of the community. This could mean including community-specific cultural references or changing the language of the materials to that of the community where needed.

Chart 7: Adaptation costs

	Estimated number of units			Cost		
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
<i>Pre-adaptation phase</i>						
Meetings/contact sessions	4	18	35	6 000	28 207	57 315
Travel	2	10	20	8 000	41 788	87 337
Accommodation	2	10	20	2 000	10 447	21 834
Subsistence	2	10	20	904	4 722	9 869
<i>Subtotal - Pre-adaptation</i>				16 904	85 164	176 355
<i>Adaptation phase</i>						
Programme adaptation	6	30	60	1 500	7 835	16 376
Programme translation						
Travel						
Accommodation						
Subsistence						
<i>Subtotal - Adaptation</i>				1 500	7 835	16 376

The cost of translation is R120 000. This cost is not included in the scenario above but can be included by changing the parameters in the policy assumptions sheet.

Chart 8: Programme adaptation demand variables

Input/activity	Assumptions	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	
Demand variables					
Number of NPOs capacitated to run programmes		1	5	10	
Total number of NPOs running programmes		1	6	16	
Average number of courses run by NPOs per year		20	20	20	
Average total number of courses run per year		20	120	320	
					Choose on policy assumptions sheet
Number of capacity developer team members	Per partner meeting	2	2	2	
Meetings/contact sessions		4	4	4	
Initial contact with implementers		1	1	1	
Programme development		2	2	2	
Sign contract		0.5	0.5	0.5	
Number of implementers/partner team members		2	2	2	
Adaptation work days		3	3	3	
Recruit other stakeholders to be part of the adaptation team		1	1	1	
Review of the programme resources by adaptation team		2	2	2	
					Choose on policy assumptions sheet
Translation of programme (where needed)		0	0	0	

Staff training

Facilitator training takes place over five days with an additional seven days of in-practice monitoring by the capacity developers. In addition, coaches are trained over three days with five days of in-practice monitoring. This translates to 20 days of contact time by the capacity developers per organisation.

Chart 9: Staff training costs

	Estimated number of units			Budget		
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Staff training						
Trainers	40	200	400	60 000	313 410	655 027
Implementation assessment	4	20	40	6 000	31 341	65 503
Venue	20	100	200	12 000	62 682	131 005
Lunch meals	200	1 000	2 000	50 000	261 175	545 856
Training resources	8	40	80	1 600	8 358	17 467
Travel	2	10	20	8 000	41 788	87 337
Accommodation	40	200	400	40 000	208 940	436 685
Subsistence	40	200	400	18 080	94 441	197 381
<i>Subtotal - Programme preparation</i>				195 680	1 022 134	2 136 261

Courses

The courses sheet consists of three subsections: Mobilisation of participating families, Course sessions and Close-out sessions.

Chart 10: Courses costs


	Estimated number of units			Budget		
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Mobilisation of participating families						
Marketing materials	180	180	180	90 000	94 023	98 254
Travel						
Accommodation						
Subsistence						
Subtotal - Mobilisation				90 000	94 023	98 254
Course sessions						
Venue for sessions	240	1 440	3 840	144 000	902 621	2 515 303
Childcare assistance	240	1 440	3 840	84 000	526 529	1 467 260
Participant transport				44 450	46 437	48 527
Meals during programme sessions	4 800	4 800	4 800	120 000	125 364	131 005
Travel						
Accommodation						
Subsistence						
Subtotal - Course sessions				392 450	1 600 951	4 162 096
Close-out sessions						
Celebratory meal	400	2 400	6 400	20 000	125 364	349 348
Travel						
Accommodation						
Subsistence						
Subtotal - Close-out sessions				20 000	125 364	349 348

The largest cost component for running the courses are the venue costs, meals and childcare. In most cases these costs can be reduced by using community facilities that are provided for free (e.g. church halls or schools). Childcare will also not necessarily be required for each session and all courses. These costs are included nevertheless.

Chart 11: Courses demand variables

Input/activity	Assumptions		
Demand variables	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Number of NPOs capacitated to run programmes	1	5	10
Total number of NPOs running programmes	1	6	16
Average number of courses run by NPOs per year	20	20	20
Average total number of courses run per year	20	120	320
Number of participants in the sessions	20	20	20
Number of days required for course	12	12	12
Number of buses transporting participants and facilitators	It is assumed that 20% of the bus costs goes towards transporting participants to these sessions		
	35%	35%	35%
Number of child minders required per session	1	240	1 440
		3 840	
Number of days required for mobilisation	3	3	3
Number of preparation team members	3	3	3

Choose on policy assumptions sheet



Choose on policy assumptions sheet



Scaling up

To illustrate the cost implications for scaling up the parenting programme over a number of years, the following figure shows how the costs change from capacitating one NGO in the first year to capacitating 10 in the third year. The per capita cost reduces from R4 776 to R4 242.

Chart 12: Per capita cost

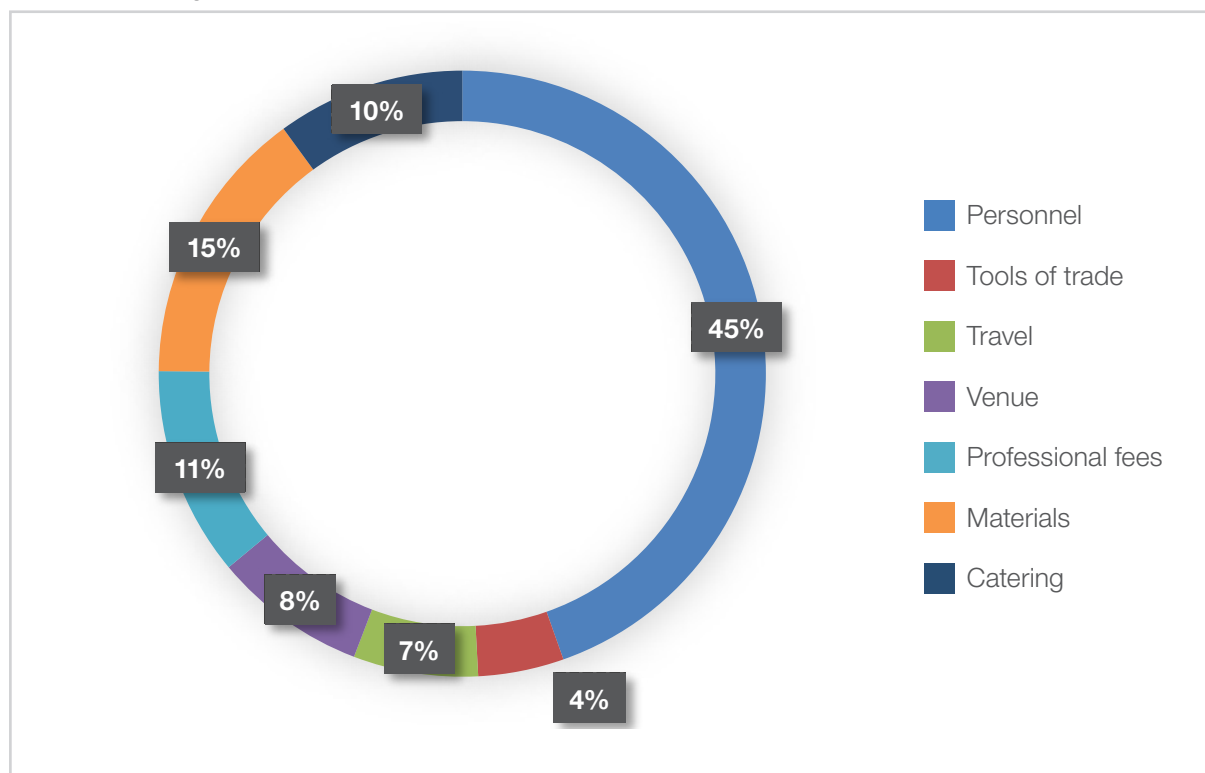
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Number of junior facilitators per NPO	4	4	4
Number of debriefing sessions per facilitator	4	4	4
Total debriefings per year	384	2 304	6 144

Summary and conclusion

Based on the costing model, the largest cost item to deliver a parenting programme is personnel (Chart 13), followed by training and marketing materials and professional fees. Areas for cost-saving include:

- Venue hire – although the venue hire fee has been set at a minimal rate in the model, there is still room for implementers to negotiate lower (or no) fees at community venues.
- Child minders – the professional fees include costs for a child minder at each session and all courses. In some cases child minders will not be required.
- Employ more junior facilitators – in the scenario in Chart 13, four senior and junior facilitators are costed respectively. If one changes this to one senior facilitator to seven junior facilitators, one could reduce the personnel costs by 6.9% in the first year.

Chart 13: First-year costs



Notes

- 1 World Health Organization, INSPIRE: Seven strategies for ending violence against children, New York, 2016.
- 2 National Strategic Plan on Gender-based Violence and Femicide, Interim Steering Committee, Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, 47, www.gov.za/documents/national-gender-based-violence-and-femicide-strategic-plan-draft-12-aug-2019-0000, accessed 7 September 2021, 2020.
- 3 M Amisi et al, Evidence Map: South African interventions to prevent violence against women and children, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 2019.

About the authors

Carmen Abdoll is a Senior Economist at Cornerstone Economic Research. She has experience working in public sector finance management and budget analysis in the Southern African region. She also has experience in analysing social welfare and education policies, conducting expenditure analyses, and developing costing models.

Lugisani Ragwala is a Researcher at Cornerstone Economic Research. He has worked on projects relating to performance evaluation and performance information by developing process descriptions and documentation. Recently he has become more involved in developing costing models.

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Development partners



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Cover image: © Jonathon Rees. Caption: Elizabeth Harmse and her baby Danicah. Elizabeth was a participant in two of the parenting programmes offered by the Seven Passes initiative.
