

Chief for a Day: Who Should Be Stewarding Development Dollars?

Evidence from a Field Experiment

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ABSTRACT of presentation held on **3 April 2014, room C82, 12.30 – 13.15 hrs., Leeuwenborch, Wageningen**

This paper uses a field experiment in Sierra Leone to examine how leadership structure influences the efficiency of development projects. To do so, we vary the conditions under which a development project is managed - by local elites or by randomly selected villagers. The design is unique, in that it permits us to explore the effectiveness of two alternative local governance modalities and the extent of elite capture in community projects. We find little evidence that local elites capture project resources, and, they are better managers of development projects. This improved performance is linked importantly to the power of the local chief.



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