

## **Effect of civil society capacity building and civic engagement and empowerment initiatives on Feelings of trust and acceptance of diversity**

Civic education programs, including participatory workshops and visual tools, had a small effect on improving feelings of trust and acceptance of diversity.

**Geographical region:** Sub Saharan Africa

**Effect size:** Small effect ( $g=0.058$ )

**Confidence in study findings:** Low confidence (2 studies; 4 ES)

### **Short summary**

Civic education programs aimed at improving democratic engagement and tolerance had a small effect on feelings of trust and acceptance of diversity. Using participatory workshops and visual tools, the programs modestly increased social tolerance and political tolerance, particularly among low-literacy populations, but had limited impact on national identity or broader ethnic acceptance. We have low confidence in the cell due to the limited number of studies.

### **Long summary**

#### *The intervention*

The civic education program involved participatory community workshops promoting democratic awareness, ethnic tolerance, and governance. Visual tools were used to accommodate low literacy, with content covering decentralization, rights, and inclusive political participation. The program operated in post-election and fragile contexts in Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

#### *How the intervention is expected to work*

Workshops and visual tools aimed to enhance understanding of democratic principles, increase political knowledge, and encourage civic participation. By promoting ethnic tolerance, informed engagement, and support for democratic norms, the program sought to strengthen trust and acceptance of diversity.

#### *The evidence base*

The cell includes two primary studies and one systematic review. Designs included matched treatment-control and randomized encouragement approaches, with 1,120 respondents (800 encouraged to attend workshops).

Studies were conducted in Kenya and eight villages in Bandundu Province, DRC.

#### *Evidence findings*

Civic education using workshops and visual tools had a small effect on social and political tolerance. There was modest improvement in democratic engagement and minority inclusion, but no significant changes in national identity or generalized trust.

#### *The review evidence*

Civil society capacity building and civic engagement initiatives modestly increased social tolerance but had no significant effect on trust. Acceptance of diversity improved through social norm shifts, but national identity and political tolerance remained unchanged.

#### *The impact evaluation evidence*

**Finkel (2012)** focuses on the Second Kenya National Civic Education Programme (NCEP II-Uraia), implemented from 2006 to 2007. It aimed to enhance democratic awareness, ethnic tolerance, and governance in Kenya amid ethnic tensions and post-2007 election violence. Conducted in Kenya, the study involved a matched treatment-control design, surveying 3,600 individuals (1,800 participants and 1,800 nonparticipants). The program increased political knowledge and engagement while modestly reducing ethnic intolerance and democratic backsliding during violence. Limitations include moderate effects on democratic values and challenges in sustaining civic education impacts. The civic education program had no significant impact on shifting ethnic identity to national identity (coefficient: 0.03,  $p > 0.10$ ) or improving political tolerance toward disliked ethnic groups (coefficient: -0.01,  $p > 0.10$ ). However, it significantly increased social tolerance toward these groups (coefficient: 0.11,  $p < 0.05$ ). This highlights the program's moderate effectiveness in fostering social tolerance but its limited influence on broader aspects of democratic orientation, such as national identity and political tolerance, among participants. The study is rated as a low confidence quantitative study due to lack of pretest data and recall bias.

**Finkel (2021)** The study evaluated the VOICE civic education program in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2010–2011. It targeted decentralization awareness and democratic engagement through participatory community workshops, using visual tools to address low literacy levels. The program was conducted in eight villages in Bandundu province, involving 1,120 respondents, with 800 randomly encouraged to attend workshops. Using a randomized encouragement design, pre- and post-surveys were conducted to measure changes in democratic attitudes. The sample included diverse demographic characteristics, enabling robust analysis of civic education's effects on political participation and attitudes toward democracy. The VOICE program significantly increased tolerance as a democratic value, with participants showing a higher likelihood of extending rights to those holding non-democratic views (coefficient: 0.134,  $p < 0.05$ ). This suggests the program effectively fostered political tolerance, enhancing support for democratic norms even in contexts with fragile democratic institutions. This study is considered a low confidence quantitative study.

#### *Confidence assessment*

This cell is rated low confidence because of a limited number of studies in the cell.

#### *Link to review summaries*

Spangaro Jo (2021)

#### **Other outcomes in the study/cell**

- Violence and atrocity prevention/Social norms regarding violence and atrocities
- Community and state governance/Civic participation/ Government performance
- Human security/Political security/Intermediate social cohesion outcomes