

Effect of Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration on sense of belonging

One quantitative study reports that DDR programs have only a small effect on ex-combatants' sense of belonging.

Geographical region: Sub Saharan Africa

Effect: Small effect ($g = 0.094$)

Confidence in study findings: Low as based on one low confidence study.

Short summary

Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration are intended to reduce conflict reoccurring. One part of this is for ex-combatants to break ties with their former faction and rebuild their sense of belonging in their community. However, evidence from one study in Sierra Leone finds only a small and statistically insignificant effect, especially for more affluent and better educated individuals. There may be some effect for women.

Long summary

The intervention

Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration is a programme for ex-combatants that brings together reconciliation, security and socio-economic dimensions. The process typically involves removing weapons from combatants' hands, taking individuals out of militarised structures, and providing them with training for new livelihoods as well as psychosocial support.

The row also includes peacekeeping operations, but there are no studies in this cell addressing these.

How is the intervention expected to work?

Reintegration activities such as psychosocial support and livelihoods interventions may lead to distancing from former faction connections and an increased sense of belonging.

The evidence base

There is one large n randomized controlled trial from Sierra Leone in this cell: Humphreys Macartan and Weinstein Jeremy M. (2007). Demobilization and Reintegration. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 51(4), pp.531-567. The study is rated low confidence on account of failure to report attrition.

The cell also includes 1 qualitative study: Touray (2019), Sub Saharan Africa.

Evidence findings

Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration do not increase the sense of belonging of ex-combatants.

Included study

Humphreys and Weinstein (2007) evaluates the factors that affect the outcomes of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs at a micro-level or individual level, using data from post-war Sierra Leone.

The study surveyed 1,043 ex-combatants from five major factions in Sierra Leone's civil war, including both male and female participants as well as those who did and did not participate in DDR programs. The analysis employed a quantitative approach, using probit regression models to assess reintegration outcomes across four dimensions: breaking factional ties, employment, community acceptance, and confidence in democratic processes.

Overall, there is no significant effect on ex-combatants breaking ties with their faction. Female combatants were more likely to sever factional ties, while wealthier and better-educated individuals were less likely to do so.

Overall, the study found little evidence that DDR programs significantly improved reintegration outcomes compared to non-participants.

Confidence assessment

The cell is rated low confidence.

Other outcomes in this study

- Violence and atrocity prevention/Social norms regarding violence and atrocities
- Human security/Economic security
- Community and state governance/Government performance
- Social cohesion/Feelings of trust and acceptance of diversity