

Effect of Dispute Resolution on Economic Security

Dispute resolution interventions in Nigeria had a small positive effect on economic security, with improvements observed in economic access but limited overall impact.

Geographical Region: Sub Saharan Africa

Effect: Small effect ($g = 0.077$)

Confidence in study findings: Low confidence (1 study with 11 effect size)

Short Summary

Dispute resolution programs, including CONCUR and IPNN in Nigeria, aimed to reduce conflict and promote stability through community engagement and leadership training. CONCUR targeted pastoralist-farmer conflicts via Interest-Based Negotiation (IBN) training, joint economic projects, and policy advocacy, while IPNN engaged religious leaders through IBN training, interfaith initiatives, and media campaigns. A difference-in-differences evaluation of 1,806 CONCUR and 710 IPNN households found that CONCUR improved economic access, increasing work opportunities (18% to 66%) and goods availability (9% to 50%), although income stability remained mixed and farmland sharing improved minimally (71% to 74%). IPNN increased social cohesion (trust: 16% to 39%; interfaith acceptance: 88% to 95%) but showed no measurable economic impact.

Long summary

The intervention

The CONCUR and IPNN implemented dispute resolution activities focused on community engagement, leadership training, and IBN-based conflict mediation. CONCUR emphasized joint economic projects, policy advocacy, and resource-sharing to reduce pastoralist-farmer disputes. IPNN worked with religious leaders through IBN training, interfaith initiatives, and media campaigns to promote cooperation and reduce tensions.

How the intervention is expected to work

These interventions are expected to empower local leaders and community members to mediate conflicts peacefully by providing them with the necessary tools to manage disputes and promote cooperation. IBN training helps leaders facilitate impartial dialogue, reducing tensions and preventing conflicts from escalating. Joint economic projects foster collaboration between different groups, building trust and addressing the economic drivers of conflict. Through these efforts, the interventions seek to improve economic stability.

The evidence base

The cell contains two studies; one is primary study conducted in Nigeria and another is low-confidence qualitative study authored by Dhialhaq Ahmad (2014).

Evidence findings

CONCUR improved economic access, while IPNN strengthened social cohesion but did not produce measurable economic benefits. Overall confidence in these findings is low, due to the limited number of studies and a non-experimental study design.

Included studies: There is one impact evaluations of the same author only, and both study summaries are thus provided here:

Baran (2017) assessed conflict resolution interventions in Nigeria, focusing on the economic impact of the Community-Based Conflict Management and Cooperative Use of Resources (CONCUR) program, implemented by Mercy Corps (2012–2016) in Nigeria’s Middle Belt, and the Inter-Religious Peacebuilding in Northern Nigeria (IPNN) initiative. CONCUR sought to mitigate conflicts between pastoralist and farming communities through Interest-Based Negotiation (IBN) training, joint economic projects (e.g., community gardens, shared grazing areas, marketplaces), and policy advocacy addressing the economic roots of conflict. IPNN, on the other hand, worked with religious leaders to promote non-violent conflict resolution through IBN training, interfaith initiatives, and peace-focused media campaigns. The study employed a mixed-methods impact evaluation using a difference-in-difference (DiD) framework, comparing baseline and endline data from conflict-affected communities in Kaduna, Nasarawa, and Plateau states. The sample included 1,806 baseline and 1,276 endline surveys for CONCUR, and 1,096 baseline and 923 endline surveys for IPNN, with random sampling conducted through community mapping. Qualitative data from focus groups and key informant interviews provided additional insights. Findings indicated notable improvements in economic security, particularly in CONCUR communities, where households reporting increased work opportunities rose from 18% to 66%, and access to goods improved from 9% to 50%. Furthermore, 47% of CONCUR households reported that conflict no longer affected their livelihoods, a significant improvement relative to comparison sites ($p < 0.01$). However, income stability showed mixed results, as 70% of CONCUR households reported income growth compared to the previous year, but this change was not statistically significant compared to control sites. Investment in productive assets such as livestock and equipment also showed no significant improvement. The study was rated high to medium confidence.

Confidence assessment

Overall, the study is rated as low confidence due to the limited number of studies in the cell (fewer than three) and its reliance on a non-experimental study design.

Other outcomes assessed:

Human security/physical security

Violence & atrocity prevention/Diplomatic relation & peaceful dispute resolution

Social cohesion/feelings of trust & acceptance of diversity