

Effect of Intergroup contact and peace education on Economic Security

Intergroup contact and peace education interventions show a **harmful effect** on economic security

Geographical region : Middle East & North Africa, Sub Saharan Africa.

Effect size: Harmful effect ($g=-0.089$)

Confidence in the study findings: Low confidence (3 studies: 67 ES)

Short summary

Intergroup contact and peace education interventions have a harmful effect on economic security. While localized benefits from mentorship and dispute resolution were observed, improvements in employment, business outcomes, and property security were limited and not consistently sustained. Confidence in this cell is low due to the small number of studies and variation in study quality.

Long summary

The intervention

Interventions aimed to enhance economic security through intergroup contact and peace education. Some programs incorporated economic components such as business mentorship or cash grants to support employability and entrepreneurship. While these interventions sought to improve trust, reduce prejudice, and promote conflict resolution, their long-term impact on economic security remained limited due to contextual challenges and inconsistent implementation.

How the intervention is expected to work

These interventions are designed to strengthen economic security by combining social cohesion efforts—through volunteering, mentorship, and dispute resolution training—with targeted economic support. The expectation is that reducing intergroup tension and fostering cooperation creates a more stable environment conducive to economic activity. Economic components, such as mentorship or cash grants, aim to improve employability and entrepreneurship. However, the benefits are context-dependent and constrained by methodological and implementation limitations.

The evidence base

The cell includes three impact evaluations and one systematic review. The review is concerned with gender-specific and transformative interventions in fragile contexts and it improves economic security and social inclusion but have limited impact on reducing gender-based violence.

The evidence base consists of studies conducted in Lebanon, Uganda, and Liberia, using a mix of quasi-experimental and randomized controlled trial (RCT) designs to evaluate the impact of intergroup contact and peace education on economic security.

Evidence findings

Interventions had a harmful effect on economic security. Employment gains, business profits, and household well-being were limited in Lebanon and Uganda, and property security and economic investment showed minimal improvements in Liberia. Overall, economic outcomes were inconsistent and uncertain across contexts.

The review evidence

The review indicates that gender-specific and transformative interventions in fragile settings can improve economic security, though effects are variable and context-dependent.

The impact evaluation evidence

Alaref (2019) evaluated the impact of an inter-community volunteering program in Lebanon, consisting of 80 hours of volunteering activities and 20 hours of soft skills training, aimed at enhancing social cohesion. Using a quasi-experimental difference-in-difference (DiD) design, it tracked 759 youth (473 treatment, 286 comparison) from different regions. Results from Table 5 showed that while the intervention increased tolerance values by 0.26 standard deviations (SD) and a sense of belonging by 0.35 SD, it had no significant impact on economic security outcomes, employability, or employment, with unemployment rates dropping similarly in both treatment and control groups. The study is rated low confidence due to its little description of the intervention.

Baseler (2021) conducted in Uganda, used a randomized controlled trial (RCT) to assess the impact of cash grants, refugee aid-sharing information, and mentorship programs on 1,406 Ugandan microentrepreneurs in salons and tailoring businesses. The results showed that mentorship by a Ugandan (T5) increased business profits by 23% ($p < 0.1$), while mentorship by a refugee (T4) and cash grants alone (T2) had no significant profit effects. Other results revealed that marketing practices improved by 0.12 SD ($p < 0.05$) under the cash and information treatment, though record-keeping and inventory management effects were weaker and the mentorship by a Ugandan (T5) increased household well-being by 0.134 SD ($p < 0.08$) and boosted household savings, though no significant changes in total household income were observed. The study is rated as medium confidence due to attrition rate.

Hartmann (2018) evaluates the long-term impact of an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) intervention in rural Liberia, implemented through a randomized controlled trial (RCT) across 246 communities in Lofa, Nimba, and Grand Gedeh counties. The intervention, conducted by UNHCR and JPC, trained approximately 12,000 individuals in mediation and conflict resolution to reduce violence and improve property security. While the study found a 28% reduction in threats, property destruction, and violence, it did not significantly improve perceived property rights or economic investment. Politically connected individuals benefited more, while poorer and less-connected residents felt less secure about their land. This study is rated as high and medium confidence quantitative study.

Confidence Assessment

The overall confidence in the cell is low due to a limited number of the studies.

Link to review summaries

Lwamba (2022)

Other outcomes in the study

- Violence and atrocity prevention / Diplomatic relations and peaceful dispute resolution / Nature and scale of violence or atrocities
- Social cohesion / Acceptance of diversity / Sense of belonging
- Human security / Educational security/Intermediate social cohesion outcomes