

Effect of Intergroup contact and peace education on physical security

Intergroup contact and peace education interventions show a harmful effect on physical security though the effect was not statistically significant. This indicates a negative directional shift in perceived safety.

Geographical region: Europe & Central Asia

Effect size: Harmful effect ($g = -0.046$)

Confidence in the study findings: Low confidence (1 study: 3 ES)

Short summary

Intergroup contact and peace education interventions show a **harmful effect** on physical security. Participants in the intervention reported slightly lower feelings of safety compared to the control group. While the effect was not statistically significant, it suggests a negative directional shift in perceived physical security. Confidence in this cell is low due to the limited number of studies.

Long summary

The intervention

The LivingSideBySide (LSBS) program is an eight-week, after-school peacebuilding intervention implemented in southern Kyrgyzstan (Osh, Jalalabad, and Batken oblasts). The program included 18 interactive workshops on trust, empathy, conflict resolution, and cooperation, facilitated by trained teachers. Activities involved structured exercises and community service projects designed to promote interethnic understanding among students aged 13–18 in multi-ethnic schools.

How the intervention is expected to work

LSBS is grounded in Allport's Intergroup Contact Theory, which posits that structured, positive interactions between diverse groups reduce prejudice and foster tolerance. The program uses interactive workshops to build trust, encourage empathy, and teach conflict resolution skills. Students engage in perspective-taking, self-reflection, and cooperative activities across ethnic lines, supported by facilitators modeling respectful dialogue. Community projects allow participants to apply learning in real-world contexts, aiming to reduce anxiety, improve understanding, and promote attitudinal and behavioral change toward peace, tolerance, and inclusion.

The evidence base

The cell includes 1 impact evaluations and 2 systematic reviews. There is a moderate degree of consistency in the review findings. The review is concerned with interventions including intergroup contact and peace education for physical security.

The cell includes one impact evaluation. The evidence base consists of quasi-experimental design. The study was conducted in southern Kyrgyzstan, specifically in the Osh, Jalalabad, and Batken oblasts.

Evidence findings

The LSBS program showed a harmful effect on physical security, with participants reporting slightly lower feelings of safety compared to the control group. The effect was not statistically significant ($p = -0.670$), indicating no measurable impact on perceived school safety or inclusivity.

The review evidence

The review finds that gender-specific and transformative interventions in fragile contexts have a positive but variable impact on mixed security, improving physical security.

The impact evaluation evidence

Aladysheva (2017) The LivingSideBySide® (LSBS) programme is an eight-week peace education initiative in southern Kyrgyzstan, designed to enhance trust, cooperation, and conflict resolution among youth. Using a quasi-experimental design, the study analyzed programme impacts through difference-in-means tests across treatment and control groups. Results show that the programme intervention had no measurable impact ($p=0.670$) on perceived school safety and non-discrimination, thus on physical security. It did not significantly alter students' perceptions of their school's inclusivity or safety environment. The study is rated high confidence.

Confidence Assessment

We have low confidence in the cell because of a limited number of studies.

Link to review summaries

Lwamba (2022)

Spangaro Jo (2021)

Other outcomes in the study

- Violence and atrocity prevention / Nature and scale of violence or atrocities
- Social cohesion / Feelings of trust/ Acceptance of diversity/ Sense of belonging/ Willingness to participate or help
- Human security/Educational security/Intermediate social cohesion outcomes