

Effect of intergroup contact and peace education on political security

Intergroup contact and peace education interventions show a harmful effect on political security, with treated participants reporting slightly lower levels of political engagement compared to the control group.

Geographical region: Sub Saharan Africa

Effect size: Harmful effect ($g=-0.04$)

Confidence in study findings: Low confidence (01 study; 02 ES)

Short summary

This cell examines intergroup contact and peace education programs aimed at fostering political security by reducing electoral violence and promoting civic participation. While the intervention reduced incidents of electoral violence, it showed a harmful effect on political engagement, with treated individuals reporting slightly lower participation than the control group. Confidence in this finding is low due to reliance on a single study.

Long summary

The intervention

The intervention involved a voter education and anti-violence campaign led by ActionAid International Nigeria before the 2007 elections. Activities included town meetings, theatre performances, roadshows, and distribution of anti-violence materials. The campaign targeted communities in six violence-prone Nigerian states, aiming to reduce electoral intimidation and promote peaceful civic participation through collective awareness and empowerment.

How the intervention is expected to work

The intervention aims to reduce electoral violence and promote civic engagement by fostering collective empowerment and shifting social norms around political participation. Drawing on collective action theory, it seeks to reduce individuals' fear of retaliation by showing that many others also oppose violent politicians. Public activities such as theatre performances, roadshows, and town meetings spread anti-violence messages, create dialogue, and build confidence in peaceful participation. By increasing visibility of nonviolent resistance, the campaign aims to encourage democratic engagement and weaken support for violent actors.

The evidence base

The cell includes only one impact evaluation. The study used a randomized controlled trial across 12 areas in six Nigerian states with histories of electoral violence and unrest.

Evidence findings

The intervention resulted in a harmful effect on political engagement, with treated participants reporting slightly lower levels of political participation compared to the control group. The effect was small and not statistically significant but indicates a negative directional change.

The impact evaluation evidence

Fafchamps (2013) The study assessed the impact of an anti-violence voter education campaign conducted by ActionAid International Nigeria during the 2007 national elections. Implemented across six Nigerian states known for political unrest, the campaign included town meetings, theatre performances, roadshows, and distribution of materials promoting non-violent political participation. Using a randomized controlled trial design, the intervention assigned 12 electoral areas into treatment and control groups. A baseline survey was conducted with 1,200 respondents (50 per area), followed by a post-election survey. Additionally, 300 untargeted individuals from the treated areas were surveyed to capture indirect (diffusion) effects. Findings showed a significant reduction in electoral violence among the targeted group, with a 14.3 percentage point decrease in reported violence ($p = 0.004$), indicating strong impact. In contrast, the untargeted group showed no significant change, with a 1.6 percentage point decrease ($p = 0.798$). These results demonstrate the intervention's effectiveness in reducing electoral violence among directly exposed individuals, while indirect diffusion effects to untargeted community members were negligible. This study is rated as low confidence quantitative study as both the targeted & untargeted sample sized was not drawn differently, it follows the same method & source.

Confidence assessment

The cell's confidence is low because it is based on only one study.

Other outcomes in the study

- Violence and atrocity prevention/nature and scale of violence or atrocities
- Community and state governance/civic participation