

Effect of intergroup contact and peace education on civic participation

Intergroup contact and peace education programs moderately increased civic participation, motivating individuals to engage more in peaceful political actions and voting. They contributed to democratic involvement through localized peace education efforts.

Geographical region: Sub Saharan Africa

Effect size: Moderate effect ($g=0.108$)

Confidence in study findings: Low confidence (1 study; 08 ES)

Short Summary

An intergroup contact and peace education intervention during Nigeria's 2007 elections aimed to reduce electoral violence and promote civic engagement. Through community meetings, theater, and anti-violence messaging, the campaign encouraged collective empowerment. Results indicated a moderate positive effect on civic participation, with participants more likely to oppose violence and engage in electoral activities. Confidence in this cell summary is low due to the limited number of studies.

Long summary

The Intervention

The intervention was a two-week voter education campaign during Nigeria's 2007 elections, implemented by ActionAid International Nigeria. Activities included home visits, distribution of anti-violence materials, town meetings, theater performances, and roadshows. Conducted in six violence-prone states, the campaign sought to reduce electoral intimidation and strengthen citizens' capacity for collective action and awareness.

How the Intervention is expected to work

The intervention aimed to reduce electoral violence and voter intimidation by fostering collective empowerment and public awareness. Drawing on Kuran's theory of political protest, it sought to shift perceptions of vulnerability by emphasizing community solidarity. Through direct engagement such as home visits, meetings, and theater, citizens were encouraged to resist violent actors and feel supported by their peers. Public events and campaign materials enhanced visibility and legitimacy, reducing fear and promoting confidence in peaceful participation. The campaign aimed to discourage support for violent candidates, encourage civic engagement, and reduce the effectiveness of violence as a political strategy.

The evidence base

The cell contains two systematic reviews and one impact evaluation. The overall evidence base is fragmented and weak in review findings.

The study used a randomized controlled trial design conducted across 12 enumeration areas in six Nigerian states: Lagos, Oyo, Delta, Rivers, Kaduna, and Plateau. Each treatment area was paired with a matched control area for comparison.

Evidence Findings

The intervention had a moderate positive effect on civic participation, encouraging engagement in anti-violence actions and electoral processes. It supported democratic behavior through community-based education.

The review evidence

Review findings suggest that intergroup contact and peace education interventions have shown limited and inconsistent effects on civic participation. While some programs encouraged dialogue and local engagement, evidence of sustained civic participation across groups remains limited.

The impact evaluation evidence

Fafchamps (2013) assesses the "No to Political Violence! Vote Against Violent Politicians" campaign, an intergroup contact and peace education intervention aimed at reducing electoral violence and fostering social cohesion in conflict-prone regions of Nigeria. The intervention was implemented through community-based awareness campaigns, including home visits, town meetings, and popular theater, to encourage peaceful conflict resolution. The study, designed as a randomized controlled trial (RCT) across multiple states, measured the nature and scale of violence and atrocities by analyzing behavioral changes in targeted and untargeted individuals. The findings reveal that the intervention led to a statistically significant increase of 11.6% ($p = 0.037$) in the voter empowerment postcard return rate among targeted individuals, while the untargeted group showed a smaller, non-significant increase of 4.4% ($p = 0.126$). Voting for the incumbent rose by 9.4% ($p = 0.041$) among targeted participants, but only 2.8% ($p = 0.385$) among untargeted ones. Local empowerment scores improved significantly for both targeted (0.217 SD, $p = 0.081$) and untargeted (0.316 SD, $p = 0.027$) respondents. 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 overall confidence is low due to a limited number of studies.

Link to review summaries

King (2010)

Lwamba (2022)

Other outcomes in this study

- Violence and atrocity prevention/Nature and scale of violence and atrocities
- Human Security/Political Security/