

Effect of Intergroup contact and peace education on food and nutrition and health security

Intergroup contact and peace education interventions show a large effect on food, nutrition, and health security, improving participants' perceived health-related safety and well-being..

Geographical region: South Asia, Sub Saharan Africa

Effect size: Large effect (g= 0.535)

Confidence in the study findings: Low confidence (2 studies: 10 ES)

Short summary

Intergroup contact and peace education interventions in conflict-affected settings had a large positive effect on food, nutrition, and health security. Programs such as a women's empowerment initiative in Afghanistan and reconciliation camps in Rwanda enhanced psychosocial well-being, reduced trauma, and improved participants' perceptions of health-related safety. We have low confidence in this cell due to the limited number of studies.

Long summary

The intervention

The interventions focused on addressing divisions, trauma, and post-conflict reintegration. The women's empowerment program combined education, life skills, and economic support to build agency and resilience. Reconciliation camps in Rwanda facilitated dialogue and reintegration between survivors and perpetrators of mass violence. Both approaches promoted empathy, mutual understanding, and psychosocial recovery.

How the intervention is expected to work

These interventions aim to improve health security by fostering empathy, reducing prejudice, and enhancing social cohesion. Empowerment programs equip participants with skills, knowledge, and economic resources, supporting psychological resilience. Reconciliation initiatives facilitate dialogue, social reintegration, and healing, reducing hostility and promoting collective well-being. Together, these strategies enhance participants' perceptions of health, safety, and stability in post-conflict settings.

The evidence base

The cell includes two impact evaluations. The evidence base consists of quasi-experimental design. The studies were conducted in Kandahar, Afghanistan and in Rwanda.

Evidence findings

The interventions had a large positive effect on food, nutrition, and health security, indicating substantial improvements in participants' perceived health-related safety and well-being following the programs.

The impact evaluation evidence

Corboz (2019) evaluates the effectiveness of a school-based peace education and community social norms change intervention in reducing violence against children in Afghanistan. Conducted in 11 secondary schools across three districts in Jawzjan province, the study used an interrupted time series design with three data collection points over 12 months. The sample included 361 boys and 373 girls at the endline. The study evaluated the impact of *Women for Women International's* year-long integrated social and economic empowerment programme targeting vulnerable women in Kandahar, Afghanistan, a region heavily affected by conflict and gender-based violence. The programme included life skills education, rights awareness, vocational training, and small cash transfers. It aimed to improve mental health, hope, and wellbeing among marginalized women. A quasi-experimental design with matched intervention and control groups was used. The sample consisted of 2,158 women (1,079 intervention; 1,079 control), with baseline and endline data collected between 2016 and 2018. Key mental health outcomes showed significant improvements. The mean depression score for the intervention group dropped from 13.4 to 9.9, compared to a change from 12.8 to 12.3 in the control group ($p < 0.001$). For hope, the mean score in the intervention group increased from 26.1 to 29.9, versus 26.5 to 27.5 in the control group ($p < 0.001$). These results indicate statistically significant reductions in depression and increase in hope among women who received the intervention, suggesting its positive impact on psychosocial wellbeing. The study is rated as a low confidence.

Kang (2020) evaluated the impact of Rwanda's government-led reconciliation program, Ingando "Solidarity Camps", which aimed to reintegrate individuals who participated in the 1994 genocide (genocidaires) and promote reconciliation between them and genocide survivors. Conducted in Rwanda, the study used a quasi-experimental design comparing participants in the Ingando program to non-participants. The sample included all three groups: survivors, genocidaires (perpetrators), and others indirectly affected, surveyed using representative methods. Key mental health outcomes showed mixed results. Traumatic stress among survivors was significantly higher compared to others, and stressors attributed to genocide remained elevated, reflecting persistent psychological burdens. Among genocidaires, traumatic stress levels were lower than survivors but still present, while their stressors attributed to genocide were also high. Participation in Ingando was not associated with statistically significant improvements in traumatic stress outcomes for either group. Overall, the findings suggest that while the Ingando program sought to promote unity and healing, it did not significantly reduce trauma-related stress or perceptions of genocide-related stressors among survivors or perpetrators, indicating limited psychological benefit from the reconciliation initiative. The study is rated as low confidence study due to non-experimental design; quantitative findings did not adequately capture the participants' experiences of the encounters with depth.

Confidence Assessment

The cell's confidence is low due to the limited number of studies.

Other outcomes in the study

- Violence and atrocity prevention/justice/ nature and scale of violence or atrocities/social norms regarding violence and atrocities
- Social cohesion / feelings of trust and acceptance of diversity
- Human security/educational security/ intermediate social cohesion outcomes