

Effect of Intergroup contact and peace education on Educational Security

Intergroup contact and peace education interventions show a small effect on educational security.

Geographical region: Europe & Central Asia, Middle East & North Africa, South Asia, Sub Saharan Africa

Effect size: Small effect ($g = 0.086$)

Confidence in the study findings: Low confidence (4 studies: 13 ES)

Short summary

Intergroup contact and peace education interventions generally have a **small effect** on educational security. Programs foster communication, trust, cooperation, and school attendance while reducing violence in educational settings. Effects on leadership skills and self-efficacy were limited. Confidence in this cell is low due to the small number of studies and variation in quality across them.

Long summary

The intervention

Interventions included volunteer and soft skills training programs, peace education initiatives, and violence prevention efforts. Activities aimed to enhance communication, confidence, social cohesion, trust, cooperation, and conflict resolution skills while reducing peer violence, corporal punishment, and exposure to family violence. These interventions collectively sought to create safer, more inclusive, and supportive educational environments in fragile or conflict-affected settings.

How the intervention is expected to work

The interventions are expected to improve educational security by fostering social cohesion, skill development, and reducing violence. Volunteer and soft skills programs encourage intergroup interactions, improving communication, confidence, and teamwork. Peace education initiatives equip students with conflict resolution and cooperation skills, fostering trust and reducing biases. Violence prevention programs reduce peer aggression, corporal punishment, and exposure to family violence, supporting a safer and more inclusive learning environment. Together, these mechanisms promote consistent school attendance, psychological well-being, and resilience in students..

The evidence base

The cell includes four impact evaluations. The evidence base consists of quasi-experimental and observational studies using Difference-in-Differences (DiD), interrupted time series, and difference-in-means tests, showing mixed effects on communication, confidence, cooperation, and violence reduction.

The studies are conducted in Lebanon, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan.

Evidence findings

Intergroup contact and peace education interventions had a **small effect** on educational security. Participants reported improvements in communication, confidence, trust, and cooperation, alongside reductions in violence, bullying, and corporal punishment. However, effects on leadership skills and self-efficacy were limited, and some groups showed mixed outcomes.

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 increased trust in people of the same ethnicity (by 0.17, $p < 0.05$), in other ethnicities (by 0.04, not significant), and in first-time acquaintances (by 0.32, $p < 0.01$). Cooperation improved significantly, especially among girls (+0.23, $p < 0.1$), while bullying decreased (-0.03, $p < 0.05$). However, self-efficacy declined (-2.50, $p < 0.01$), particularly among female participants, and nationalist attitudes remained unchanged. The study is rated high confidence.

Alaref (2019) evaluates the impact of the National Volunteer Service Program (NVSP) in Lebanon, an intervention aimed at fostering social cohesion among youth through inter-community volunteering activities and soft skills training. The quasi-experimental study design used a difference-in-differences (DiD) approach, comparing 473 treatment youth from 22 selected NGOs with 286 comparison youth from 16 non-selected NGOs. The final sample included 759 youth. The results indicate that tolerance values among selected youth improved by 0.26 standard deviations (SD) ($p < 0.05$), while the sense of belonging to the Lebanese community increased by 0.35 SD ($p < 0.1$) compared to non-selected youth. However, there was no significant impact on employability, with no meaningful differences in labor market participation, wage employment, or job offers. The study is rated low confidence due to its little description of the intervention.

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. Key outcomes measured included peer violence victimization and perpetration, corporal punishment at school and home, and exposure to family violence. Results from Table 3 indicate significant reductions in peer violence, with boys' victimization decreasing from 49.7% at baseline to 25.2% at endline and girls' from 43.3% to 21.7%. Peer violence perpetration also dropped for boys (31.7% to 13.6%) and girls (17.6% to 7.2%). Corporal punishment by teachers reduced for boys (43.7% to 27.2%) and girls (35.0% to 14.2%), while corporal punishment at home saw a sharp decline for boys (16.6% to 4.7%) and girls (20.0% to 2.7%). Observations of family violence also decreased, with fewer boys (2.3% to 0.3%) and girls (2.1% to 0.8%) witnessing their mothers being beaten. Depression scores improved for both boys (63.7 to 57.7) and girls (57.7 to 52.1). Girls' school attendance significantly improved, with missed days dropping from 2.2 to 1.4 per month, while boys' attendance showed no significant change (2.4 to 3.0 days). Gender-equitable attitudes improved, increasing from 29.3 to 32.1 for boys and 30.8 to 34.3 for girls. The study is rated as a low confidence.

Corno (2019) evaluates the National Volunteer Service Program (NVSP) in Lebanon, which aimed to enhance youth social cohesion and soft skills through 80 hours of volunteering and 20 hours of soft skills training. Using a Difference-in-Differences (DiD) design with 759

participants, it assessed the program's impact on educational security, particularly leadership, communication, and confidence. Leadership skills showed a slight negative impact (DiD = -0.02, p=0.11), while communication (DiD = 0.19, p=0.12) and confidence (DiD = 0.17, p=0.14) exhibited slight positive effects. Conducted with rigorous econometric methods, including OLS estimation, fixed effects, and inverse probability weighting. The study is high confidence due to its large sample size, strong follow-up rate (88%), and intent-to-treat (ITT) analysis. Its findings provide valuable insights for policymakers on fostering youth employability and resilience in fragile settings. The study is rated as a high-confidence quantitative study due to the combination of the randomized design, large sample size, detailed methodology, rigorous data analysis, and consistent findings.

Confidence Assessment

We have low confidence in this cell due to the small number of studies, with approximately half rated as low confidence.

Other outcomes in the study

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