

Effect of land reform and natural resource management (NRM) on government performance

Informational campaigns on natural resource management have a **harmful effect** on enhancing public accountability and reducing misgovernance.

Geographic region: Sub Saharan Africa, Latin America and Caribbean, South Asia, Global

Effect: Harmful effect (g=-0.052)

Confidence in study findings: Low (1 study with 63 effect sizes)

Short Summary

The study in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, evaluated a large-scale information and deliberation campaign. A randomized controlled trial across 206 communities found that providing information to both leaders and citizens increased participation, transparency, and accountability, while focusing solely on leaders led to elite capture. Broad community engagement reduced misgovernance, but the overall effect of the intervention on governance outcomes is considered harmful in this cell due to context-specific limitations and reliance on a single study.

Long summary

The intervention

The intervention involved a large-scale information and deliberation campaign on natural resource management, targeting communities affected by newly discovered natural gas. Three treatment groups were implemented: (1) only local leaders received information, (2) both leaders and citizens received information, and (3) leaders and citizens received information plus deliberation sessions. The campaign used community meetings, door-to-door outreach, and materials in local languages to educate participants and encourage civic engagement.

How the intervention is expected to work

The campaign aimed to enhance governance by improving awareness, encouraging citizen participation, and reducing elite capture. By informing both leaders and citizens and facilitating public deliberation, the intervention sought to foster dialogue, build trust, and improve transparency and accountability in resource management.

The evidence base

This cell includes 4 studies: 1 systematic review, 2 qualitative studies, and 1 impact evaluation.

The impact evaluation study implemented a large-scale randomized controlled trial across multiple communities in Cabo Delgado province, with a sample of over 2000 households.

The qualitative studies are set in the Amazon Basin and East Timor. Meanwhile, the systematic review covered 69 case studies worldwide.

Evidence findings

The intervention had mixed effects on government performance. While informing both leaders and citizens improved public participation, transparency, and accountability, providing information only to leaders increased elite capture and rent-seeking. Overall, the evidence suggests that without broad community engagement, information campaigns may fail to improve governance and can even have harmful effects.

The review evidence

The systematic review highlighted that successful community-based natural resource management depends on effective enforcement of regulations, strong leadership, and inclusive participation, emphasizing the need for context-specific and comprehensive approaches.

The impact evaluation evidence

There is only 1 impact evaluation included in this cell. One study summary thus provided here:

Armand (2019) examine a large-scale information and deliberation campaign focused on the management of natural resources in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, particularly following the discovery of natural gas in the region. The campaign was sponsored by a coalition of international, national, and local institutions, including governmental and non-governmental organizations. The intervention aimed to increase awareness and knowledge about natural resources among local leaders and citizens through three types of campaigns: information to leaders only, information to both leaders and citizens, and information plus deliberation. The study employed a randomized controlled trial design, involving 50 communities for Treatment 1, 51 for Treatment 2, 50 for Treatment 3, and 55 for the control group. The sampling included baseline and endline surveys at household, local leader, and community levels, as well as structured community activities (SCAs) and lab-in-the-field experiments. The measurements were designed to capture outcomes related to information/awareness, elite capture, rent-seeking, and citizen mobilization, trust, and accountability. When information was provided only to local leaders, there was an increase in elite capture and rent-seeking activities. However, when information was targeted at the general population, there were increases in demand for political accountability. The study concluded that information campaigns can play a crucial role in countering the resource curse by improving accountability and reducing misgovernance. The study was rated as low confidence due to the lack of reported attrition. The document mentions that post-treatment attrition was handled through substitutions in the same household when possible. However, there is no detailed reporting on the overall attrition rates or how they might have affected the study's outcomes.

Confidence Assessment

Overall low: The cell could be rated as low confidence due to limited number of studies.

Link to review summaries

Pagdee (2006)

All studies may be accessed via the EGM.

Other outcomes in this study:

Social cohesion / feelings of trust & acceptance of diversity

Community and state governance / civic participation