

Effect of Public sector provision, governance and institutionalization intervention on Feeling of Trust and acceptance of diversity

Evidence shows that the peace building fund and reforming village-level governance interventions had small impact perceptions of poverty, targets for discrimination, potential deterioration of human rights, and disputes.

Geographic focus: Sub Saharan Africa

Effect: Small effect ($g=0.003$)

Confidence in study findings: Low (2 study with 70 effect sizes)

Short summary

Evidence from the Peace Building Fund (PBF) in Burundi and village-level governance training in Zimbabwe indicates a small effect of these interventions on feelings of trust, perceptions of poverty, human rights, and unresolved disputes. PBF facilitated political breakthroughs, improved human rights perceptions, and reduced perceived poverty among vulnerable groups. In Zimbabwe, collaborative training of village heads and community leaders decreased unresolved disputes and improved local governance outcomes..

Long summary

The intervention

The intervention assessed include the Peace Building Fund (PBF) in Burundi (2007–2013) and village-level governance training in rural Zimbabwe. PBF supported post-war recovery by unblocking parliamentary deadlocks, facilitating the FNL's transition to a political party, addressing logistical election challenges, calming politically unstable provinces, and supporting dialogue workshops for election preparation. Village-level governance interventions in Zimbabwe aimed to strengthen local leadership by providing training on regulations and conflict management techniques. Two training variants were tested: one with only the village head and another including a community leader, with the latter fostering more effective dispute resolution.

How the intervention is expected to work

PBF was expected to enhance trust, reduce poverty perception, and strengthen human rights through targeted political and social support, particularly benefiting vulnerable populations such as women, children, the landless, and the unemployed. Village governance training was designed to improve dispute resolution by increasing collaboration between village heads and civil society leaders. Training both leaders together led to substantial reductions in unresolved land and livestock disputes, improved community perceptions of fairness, and strengthened local social cohesion.

The evidence base

The cell contains 3 studies - 2 designed as quasi-experimental and 1 designed as qualitative study (Thiessen 2009).

The study was conducted in Burundi (1), Zimbabwe (1) and Afghanistan (1).

Evidence findings

Findings indicate that PBF interventions reduced perceived poverty among vulnerable groups and improved human rights perceptions. Village-level governance training reduced unresolved disputes, particularly when both the village head and a community leader participated, showing a 59% reduction in households with unresolved disputes. Overall, the interventions had a small positive effect on trust, acceptance of diversity, and social cohesion. There are 2 impact evaluations in the cell and evidence summaries of the study are thus provided here:

Included studies

Campbell (2014) assesses the contribution of the peacebuilding fund (PBF) support to Burundi's post-war transition for the entire period of PBF support to Burundi (2007 – 2013), which included two tranches of PBF funding (PBF I and PBF II) and the preparation of a third one (PBF III), and draws lessons for the PBF based on its support over this entire period. The study was designed as a quasi-experimental design. The evaluation employed an innovative research design that is grounded in a household-level survey of over 250 households from randomly sampled collines with and without PBF involvement, and over 165 semi-structured interviews, 90 of which are drawn from the randomly sampled collines. PBF funded projects made a crucial positive contribution to Burundi's peacebuilding process and achieved aspects of the Security Council mandate that would have been difficult to do without PBF funding. It provided crucial inputs that advanced Burundi's ongoing political negotiations, helping to: unblock a deadlock in the Burundian Parliament in 2007; remove the final remaining barrier to the transformation of the FNL rebel group into a political party in 2009; address several critical logistical barriers in the organization of the 2010 elections; calm communities in provinces that received a high number of IDPs and ex-combatants, and had suffered from the high levels of political violence and instability surrounding the 2010 elections; and it supported dialogue workshops in 2013 that made progress toward breaking another deadlock between political parties surrounding the preparation for the 2015 elections. The study is rated as medium confidence.

Baldwin et al. (2017) examines the potential for reforming village-level governance in Zimbabwe through horizontal pressure from civil society leaders. The intervention involved training village heads on governance rules and regulations, with a variant that included training a civil society leader alongside the village head. This approach aims to reduce the abuse of power by village heads and improve governance by leveraging the influence of local civil society leaders. The study was conducted in 270 villages in Zimbabwe, randomly assigned to two intervention variants: one where only the village head was trained, and another where both the village head and a civil society leader were trained. The training sessions were divided into two three-day modules with a three-month gap in between. Surveys were conducted three months after the training to assess the impact on governance outcomes. The inclusion of civil society leaders in the training significantly improved village heads' knowledge and adherence to procedures, with a notable increase in procedural compliance by more than half a standard deviation. The intervention also reduced bias in decision-making, particularly in food aid distribution and dispute resolution, with a 15 percentage point increase in the likelihood of receiving food aid for those with different political views from the village head. Additionally, the presence of civil society leaders increased the perceived legitimacy of village heads among citizens. The study is rated as low confidence due to limited description of the intervention and evaluation questions.

Confidence assessment

Overall low confidence due to the limited number of studies, low confidence ratings of included studies, and variability in effect sizes.

Other outcome in this study:

Baldwin (2017):

Social cohesion/Willingness to participate or help

Community and state governance / Access to justice, rights and public services

Community and state governance / Civic participation

Human security / Education security

Human security / Intermediate social cohesion outcomes

Campbell (2014):

Violence and atrocity prevention/Diplomatic relations & Peaceful dispute resolution

Human security / Economic security