

Public sector provision, governance and institutionalization intervention effect on Food security and nutrition & Health security

Evidence shows that implementation of Peace and development teams has a small impact reducing malnutrition.

Geographic focus: East Asia & Pacific

Effect: Small effect (g=0.039)

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

Short summary

The “Peace and Development Teams” (PDT) program, implemented by the Armed Forces of the Philippines, aimed to reduce child malnutrition in conflict-affected areas. Evidence from a quasi-experimental study suggests that the program had a very small effect, reducing child malnutrition by around 30% in treated villages over three years, with effects persisting for at least seven years. Improvements appear to be driven primarily by enhanced security and access to markets or existing services rather than increases in government welfare spending.

Long summary

The intervention

The PDT program was a counterinsurgency initiative designed to improve conditions in conflict-affected communities. It directly reached approximately 12% of the population across municipalities over a nine-year staggered rollout. Key activities included stabilizing communities to reduce conflict, facilitating access to markets, and improving access to existing government services. The program did not increase government expenditure on welfare or health but instead sought to create conditions under which households could improve nutrition and health outcomes.

How the intervention is expected to work

The intervention is expected to enhance food security and health by providing safer environments, which allow households to access markets and services that were previously difficult to reach due to insecurity. Reduced exposure to conflict and improved community stability create opportunities for better nutrition for children, while access to markets and services enables households to obtain sufficient and diverse foods.

The evidence base

The cell contains 1 study designed as a quasi-experimental study and 1 study as qualitative (Adedokun 2019).

The study was conducted in the Philippines (1) and Mozambique (1).

Evidence findings

The evidence shows that the PDT program had a very small effect on child malnutrition. In treated villages, child malnutrition declined by approximately 30% over three years, with sustained improvements up to seven years. The intervention’s impact was largely driven by enhanced security and improved access to markets and services rather than direct government welfare spending. There is 1 impact evaluation in the cell and evidence summaries of the study are thus provided here.

Included studies

Berman et al. (2016) evaluates the Peace and Development Teams (PDT) program, a counterinsurgency initiative by the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The authors explore

whether PDT's security measures indirectly foster development by enabling better access to markets, services, or governance. The study evaluates the staggered rollout of PDT across municipalities from 2002 to 2010 using an event study design and regression models to analyze malnutrition rates. The dataset includes malnutrition data, PDT rollout information, and violent incidents. PDT interventions reduced child malnutrition rates by 10% within the first year and up to 30% three years post-implementation. These improvements persisted for at least seven years. The reductions were attributed to improved security and market access rather than increased health or welfare spending. Neighboring municipalities experienced increased malnutrition rates due to rebel displacement from treated areas. The negative spillover effects offset the overall net gains, resulting in an aggregate effect close to zero. PDT's effect size on malnutrition was comparable to conventional health interventions. The study is rated low confidence due to non-experimental study design and its little description of the evaluation questions.

Confidence assessment

Overall confidence in the findings is low due to the limited number of studies and reliance on a single quasi-experimental evaluation.

Other outcomes in the study

No outcomes