

Effect of Research, monitoring, and assessment on willingness to participate or help

Research, monitoring, and assessment (RMA) interventions in civic education and town hall programs showed a large effect on political participation, while security committees had no measurable impact. The combined interventions demonstrated moderate improvements in engagement.

Geographical Region: Sub-Saharan Africa

Effect: Large effect ($g=0.247$)

Confidence in study findings: Low (1 study with one effect size)

Short summary

Research, monitoring, and assessment (RMA) interventions evaluated democracy promotion programs, including Civic Education and Town Hall Programs and Security Committee Programs. Civic education and town hall initiatives significantly increased voter knowledge and coordination, leading to a large effect on willingness to participate politically ($g = 0.247$). Security committee programs showed no measurable impact. Overall, the cell has low confidence due to the limited number of studies.

Long summary

The intervention

The intervention included two programs implemented in rural Liberia. The Civic Education and Town Hall Program provided electoral education, governance discussions, and facilitated community dialogues. The Security Committee Program established village-level committees with UN peacekeepers to monitor electoral security and improve communication. These programs fall under RMA through electoral security monitoring and conflict risk assessment.

How the intervention is expected to work

The interventions aim to reduce barriers to electoral participation by addressing misinformation, coordination challenges, and security concerns. Civic education improves knowledge of electoral rights and encourages coordinated voter action. Security committees seek to enhance perceived and actual safety, enabling citizens to participate without fear of intimidation. Together, these mechanisms are expected to increase political engagement in fragile settings.

The evidence base

The cell includes one primary study or impact evaluation (IE) study, which was carried out in rural villages across five counties in Liberia: Bong, Grand Bassa, Grand Gedeh, Lofa, and Nimba.

Evidence findings

Research, monitoring, and assessment (RMA) interventions in civic education and town hall programs both individually and combined significantly increased willingness to participate in political activities. Security committee programs alone showed no measurable effect, highlighting the importance of information and coordination interventions in promoting civic engagement.

Included study: The impact evaluation assessed the effects of two interventions on willingness to participate or help, presenting both individual and combined intervention impacts. A summary of the study is provided here:

Mvukiyehe (2017) evaluated two democracy promotion programs in Liberia: the Civic Education and Town Hall Program, which provided electoral education and facilitated community discussions, and the Security Committee Program, which established village-level committees in collaboration with UN peacekeepers to monitor electoral security and improve communication. These interventions aimed to address key barriers to electoral participation in fragile states by improving voter knowledge, fostering coordination, and enhancing security. The civic education program sought to reduce misinformation and encourage voting for national candidates, while the security committee program aimed to empower voters by strengthening their sense of security. The study used a cluster-randomized field experiment conducted in rural villages across five Liberian counties (Bong, Grand Bassa, Grand Gedeh, Lofa, and Nimba), with a final sample size of 142 towns after minor attrition.

The study found that the civic education/town hall and combined programs significantly

increased enthusiasm for political participation, with an effect size of about 0.25 standard deviations, while the security committee program had no significant impact. Key drivers of increased participation were rally attendance, news purchases, and petition signing. Voter registration and turnout showed a ceiling effect, with self-reported rates far exceeding official figures, likely due to response bias. While civic education had the strongest estimated effects, it was not statistically distinguishable from the combined program. Overall, the study is rated as a confidence medium-high quantitative study.

Confidence assessment

Overall, the cell has low confidence due to the limited number of studies.

Other outcomes in this study:

Community & state governance/Civic participation
Human security/Political security