

The effect of social inclusion and reintegration activities on political security

Effect: Positive (no effect size reported)

Headline finding: Inclusive community development improves women's participation in local governance institutions.

Confidence in study findings: low

Short summary

Socially inclusive community-driven development (CDD) — interventions that transfer decision-making and resources to community groups with explicit inclusion and participation objectives — have a positive effect on women's civic visibility and representation in local governance structures. These effects are concentrated at community level as structural and governance constraints limit wider system change. These findings come from a small evidence base.

Long summary

The intervention

For this cell, the intervention is defined as inclusive community-driven development (inclusive CDD). Inclusive CDD places control of the development process, resources, and decision-making authority with community groups and follows principles of transparency, participation, downward accountability, and local empowerment. Typical components include community dialogues, participatory planning, and locally managed small projects or governance committees that are explicitly designed to include marginalised groups (for example, mandated gender parity on committees).

How the intervention is expected to work

Inclusive CDD is expected to improve political security by increasing participation and representation at the local level, creating formal spaces for women's voice (committees, meetings), and strengthening local accountability. These changes can increase women's civic visibility and their participation in local governance institutions.

The evidence base

This cell is based on the Lwamba et al. (2022) systematic review, which included 104 impact evaluations across 29 fragile and conflict-affected countries. For this outcome, evidence comes from three programme studies (reported across eight papers) that evaluated inclusive CDD interventions relevant to political security and related local governance outcomes. Quantitative syntheses for some outcomes used only two studies.

Review evidence

Community-driven development and local governance interventions such as the National Solidarity Programme (Afghanistan) and AAWAZ (Pakistan) reported improved local civic engagement and greater public reporting to authorities. These effects were context-specific and locally concentrated. While Lwamba did not report pooled standardised effects for these outcomes, narrative evidence supports positive impacts on political participation and safety.

Limitations and certainty

The evidence base for political security outcomes is limited (three studies) and often narrative. Most studies carry moderate to high risk of bias, and evidence certainty is low. Effect sizes reported by Lwamba are generally small, and results should be interpreted cautiously. Therefore, confidence in generalisable effects on political security remains low.

Confidence in study findings: The review is rated high, but the cell is rated low confidence because of the small number of studies.

Source

Lwamba E, Shisler S, Ridlehoover W, Kupfer M, Tshabalala N, Nduku P, Langer L, Grant S, Sonnenfeld A, Anda D, Evers J, Snilstveit B. (2022). Strengthening women's empowerment and gender equality in fragile contexts towards peaceful and inclusive societies: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, 18(1): e1214.