

Effect of Social Inclusion & Reintegration Activity on Feeling of Trust & Acceptance of Diversity

Immigrant integration policies and the BRA-KDP program showed a small effect on trust and acceptance of diversity

Geographical regions: East Asia & Pacific, Europe & Central Asia

Effect: Small effect ($g=0.056$)

Confidence in study findings: low (2 study with 24 effect size)

Short Summary

The Immigrant Integration Policies and the Community-Based Reintegration Assistance for Conflict Victims (BRA-KDP) program demonstrated a small effect on improving feelings of trust and acceptance of diversity. Findings from cross-national surveys and quasi-experimental studies indicate that permissive integration policies slightly enhanced diversity acceptance and reduced perceived threats, though causal evidence remains limited. In contrast, reintegration programs in post-conflict settings showed mixed results, with some challenges in integrating marginalized groups such as ex-combatants. These outcomes highlight the modest yet positive influence of inclusive policies, alongside the persistent difficulty of fostering social cohesion in diverse and conflict-affected contexts.

Long summary

The intervention

The BRA-KDP program provided block grants to conflict-affected villages to support community-driven development, economic recovery, and social reintegration. Immigrant integration policies promoted inclusive rights and social norms through institutional frameworks, aiming to reduce perceived threats and encourage acceptance of diversity across societies.

How the intervention is expected to work

These interventions aim to enhance trust and diversity acceptance by shaping societal norms and promoting inclusive attitudes. Community-driven projects, participatory decision-making, and equitable resource distribution are intended to rebuild livelihoods, strengthen social cohesion, and foster trust in governance, while permissive policies reduce perceived threats and support harmonious intergroup relations.

The evidence base

The cell includes three studies: one high-medium confidence systematic review and two low-confidence impact evaluations

The primary studies were from Indonesia & focused on most group members in European countries.

The systematic review by Lwamba et al. (2022) examines fragile and conflict-affected settings in low- and middle-income countries, particularly in Southeast Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East.

Evidence Findings

Permissive immigrant integration policies were associated with increased acceptance of diversity, whereas reintegration programs in conflict-affected areas had limited effectiveness

in integrating marginalized groups such as ex-combatants. Overall, the evidence indicates a small positive effect, with challenges in fostering broader social cohesion and trust. Confidence in these findings is low.

Review findings:

Lwamba et al. (2022) review gender-specific and transformative interventions in fragile contexts, including legal rights education, financial inclusion, self-help groups, vocational training, and gender-sensitive policing. These programs aim to empower women, enhance economic opportunities, and promote social cohesion. While community-driven approaches foster trust and improve participation, governance issues and social resistance often hinder progress. Efforts to challenge discriminatory norms increase acceptance of diversity, but deeply rooted biases remain a challenge. Inclusive, context-sensitive strategies are essential for sustainable impact.

Included studies: The cell contains two low, consistent primary studies. The detailed cell summary thus provided here:

Barron (2009): The study evaluated the Community-Based Reintegration Assistance for Conflict Victims Program (BRA-KDP) in Aceh, Indonesia. This intervention aimed to support conflict-affected communities by providing block grants directly to villages. The evaluation used a quasi-experimental design to compare treatment villages that received the program with control villages that did not. Initially planned for two phases across Aceh, only the first phase was completed. Conducted from August to the following year, the program targeted 1,724 villages—about one-third of Aceh's total—across 67 rural sub districts chosen for their conflict impact and success in fund disbursement, ensuring all villages in these sub districts received block grants. To address selection bias, the researchers utilized matching techniques, where treatment villages were matched with control villages based on factors like conflict exposure and village characteristics to ensure comparability. An instrumental variables approach addressed non-compliance and confounding factors, isolating the program's effects. Alternative specifications were used to test the robustness of findings, particularly regarding social divisions and conflict escalation.

The study suggests that social acceptance of marginalized groups, such as ex-combatants and internally displaced persons (IDPs), is generally high across communities. However, treatment communities show lower acceptance, particularly among conflict victims and in roles like leaders and close friends. Despite overall high acceptance levels, this unintended negative impact on the inclusion of ex-combatants warrants further investigation. These findings highlight both the program's positive and negative effects on marginalized groups. The study is rated as a low confidence.

Schlueter (2013): examines the impact of immigrant integration policies, assessed using the Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), on perceived group threat among majority group members in European countries. It uses data from two cross-national surveys: Eurobarometer 71.3 (2009), with 21,799 respondents across 25 countries, and the European Values Study (2008-2009), with 34,412 respondents across 27 countries. Multilevel linear regression modelling was employed to analyze the relationship between permissive integration policies and perceptions of group threat, controlling for individual- and country-level variables. The findings reveal that more permissive policies are associated with reduced group threat and greater acceptance of diversity, as they establish societal norms for tolerance and positive intergroup relations. While the study benefits from large, representative samples and replication across datasets, its cross-sectional design limits causal interpretations. Overall, the study is of low quality.

Confidence assessment

Overall, the cell is rated as low due to the small (n) in the cell and the presence of low confidence in the findings.

The other outcomes assessed in the study

Human security/Economic security, Education security, Health security,

Community & state governance/Civic participation, Government performance, Access to justice, rights & public services

Violence or atrocity prevention/Nature and scale of violence or atrocities

Link to review summaries

Lwamba Etienne (2022).

The study may be accessed via the EGM.