

Effect of training & job creation on physical security

Employment programs which aim to create jobs have a moderate effect on stability, reduced fear of crime and improved perceived security, particularly for African countries.

Geographical scope: Sub Saharan Africa

Effect: Moderate effect ($g=0.154$)

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

Short Summary

Employment programs implemented in Burundi, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, and Uganda sought to promote stability by creating job opportunities in economically vulnerable regions. These interventions aimed to reduce grievances, discourage criminal activity, and foster social cohesion. Evidence from a pseudo-meta-analysis using a difference-in-differences (DID) approach indicated a **moderate effect in fear of crime**, reflecting a positive impact on perceived security. Overall, the confidence in the findings is low due to the limited number of studies.

Long summary

The intervention

The interventions focused on job creation as a mechanism for stability. Programs varied in scale, with “large” programs defined as spending over \$0.50 per capita. Targeted regions faced existing instability, though not necessarily the worst economic or security conditions. Beyond providing employment, these programs sought to influence broader social stability indicators, such as community cohesion and perceptions of safety.

How the intervention is expected to work

Increased employment is theorized to reduce grievances and lower the likelihood of engaging in antisocial or criminal behavior. Economic stability can deter participation in violence or illicit activities, while structured employment programs foster positive social norms and interactions. Additionally, visible job programs may signal improvements in economic and social conditions, reducing fear of crime. However, such interventions may also affect perceptions of government effectiveness, potentially influencing trust in institutions.

The evidence base

This cell includes 1 quantitative study and 1 systematic review.

The review examines the integration of psychosocial support with livelihood interventions in fragile and conflict-affected settings (FCS). It assesses whether this combination improves both mental well-being and economic resilience.

Evidence findings

The analysis across five African countries revealed that employment programs were consistently linked to lower fear of crime, suggesting they play a role in improving perceived security.

The review evidence

The review evidence indicates that livelihood programs alone may not substantially improve psychosocial well-being, but when combined with economic support, they tend to produce stronger and more sustained impacts on mental health.

The impact evaluation evidence

There is only 1 impact evaluation included in this cell. One study summary is thus provided here:

Ferguson (2019) explores whether employment programs contribute to peacebuilding by analyzing stability-related outcomes in five African countries (Burundi, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, and Uganda). Using a pseudo-meta-analysis and a difference-in-differences (DID) approach with matched samples, the study finds mixed effects. Employment programs significantly reduced fear of crime in all five countries, suggesting a positive impact on perceived security. The study is rated low due to little description of the intervention, outcomes, and evaluation questions.

Confidence Assessment

Overall low: : Confidence in this cell is low due to the small number of studies, with the one quantitative study rated as low confidence.

Other outcomes in the study:

Community and state governance / Government performance
Human security / Economic security

Link to study summaries

Lwamba (2022)

All studies may be accessed via the EGM.